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# GREECE

IN HER TRUE LIGHT

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HER POSITION  
IN THE WORLD-WIDE WAR

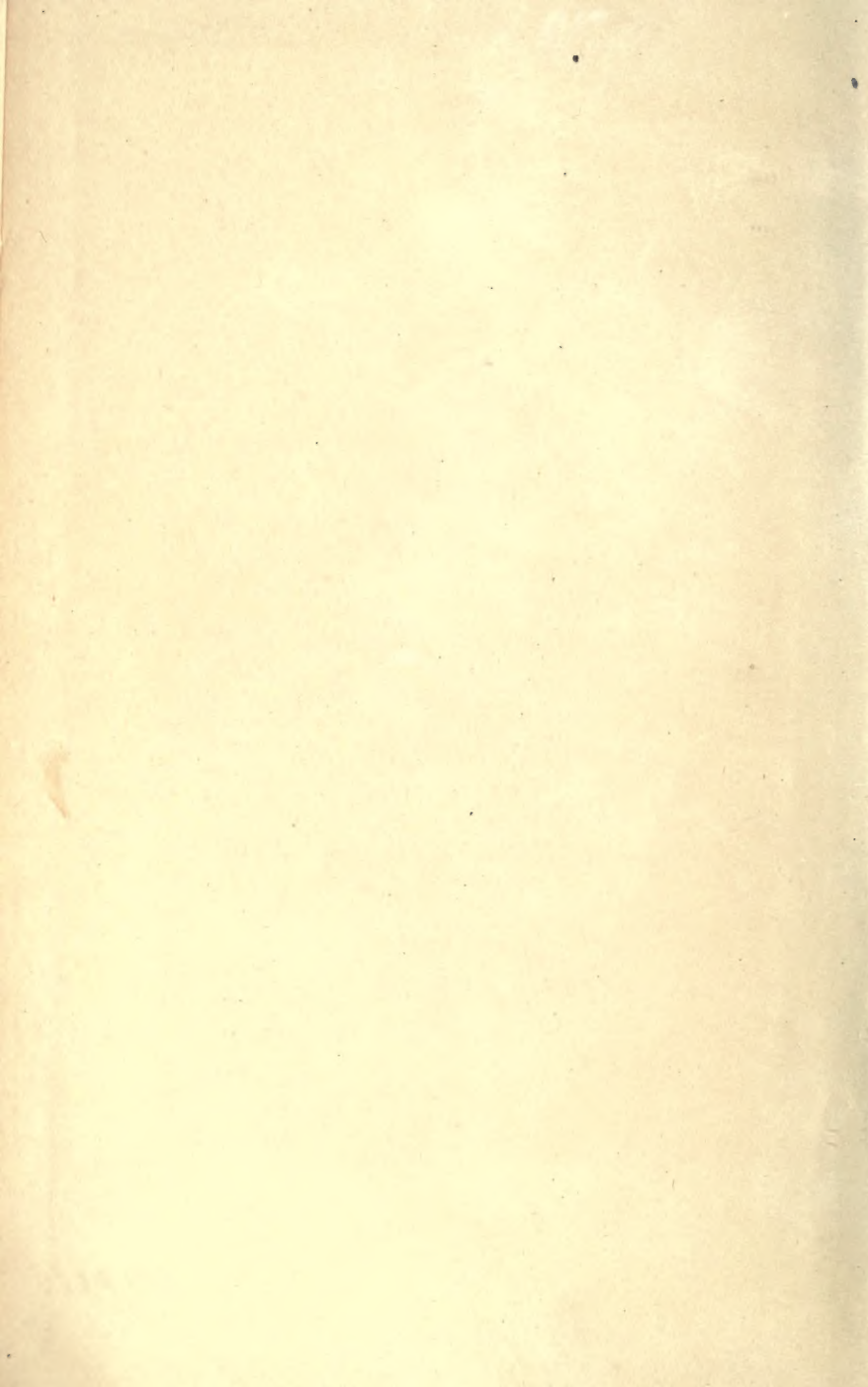
AS EXPOUNDED

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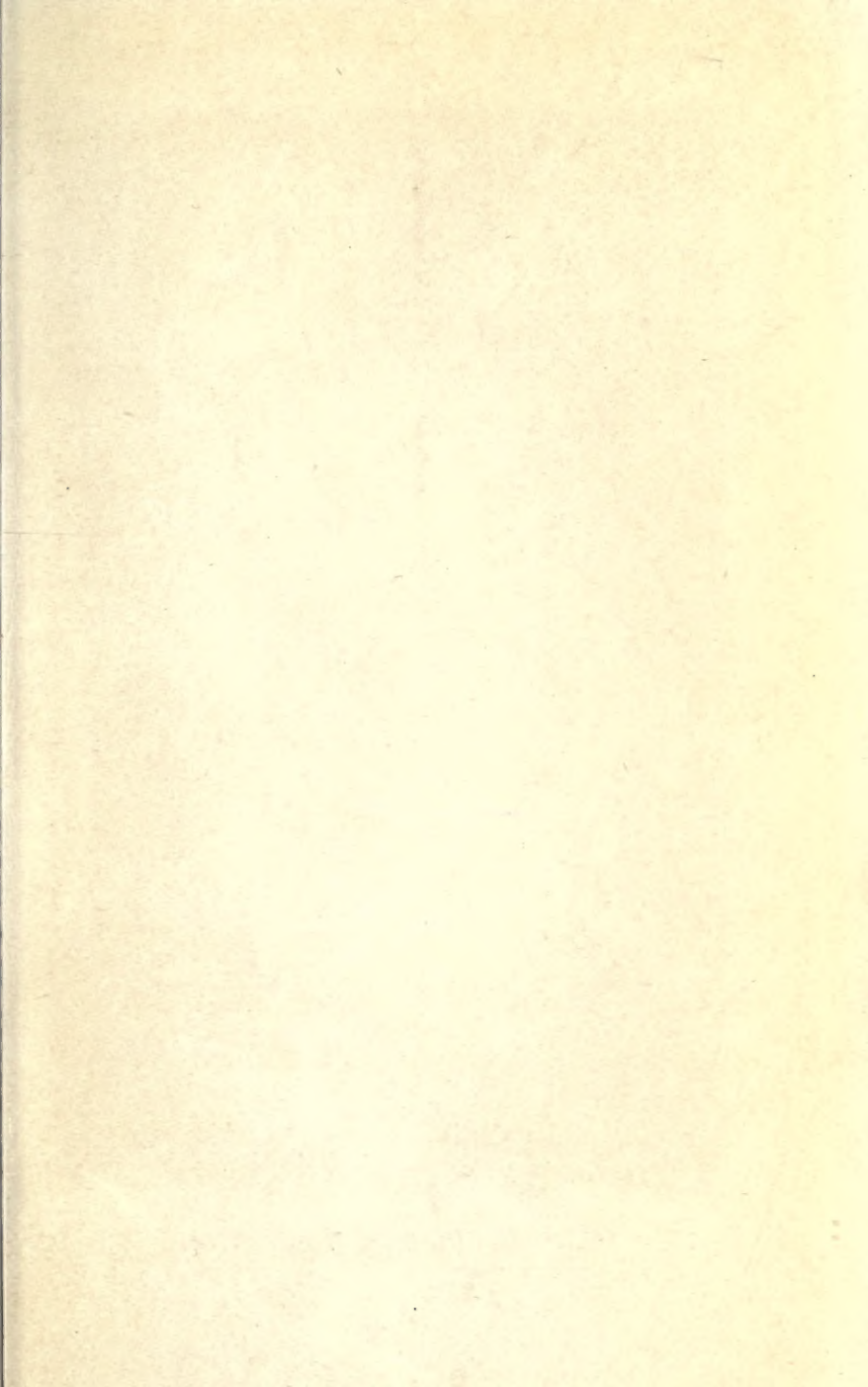
EL. K. VENIZELOS

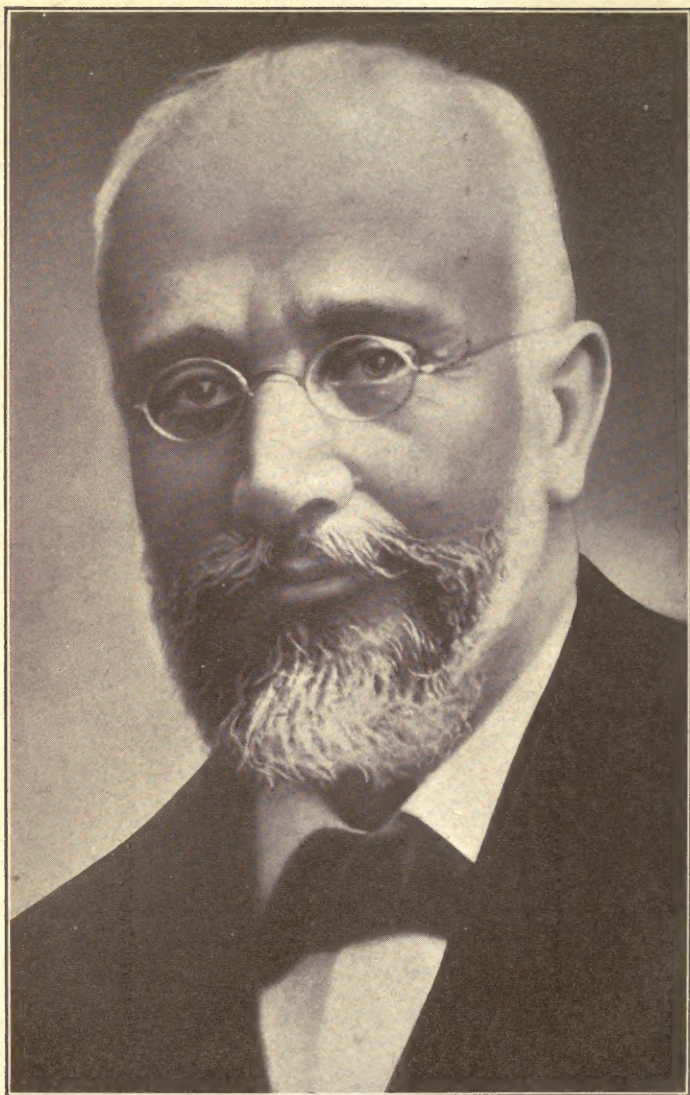












*ELEUTHERIOS K. VENIZELOS*

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# GREECE

## IN HER TRUE LIGHT

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HER POSITION  
IN THE WORLD-WIDE WAR

AS EXPOUNDED

BY

EL. K. VENIZELOS

HER GREATEST STATESMAN  
IN A SERIES OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

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TRANSLATED AND PUBLISHED

BY

SOCRATES A. XANTHAKY and NICHOLAS G. SAKELLARIOS

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1916

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By Nicholas G. Sakellarios and Socrates A. Xanthaky.

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# GREECE IN HER TRUE LIGHT

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## HER POSITION IN THE WORLD-WIDE WAR AS EXPOUNDED

BY

**EL. K. VENIZELOS**  
HER GREATEST STATESMAN

In Two Memoranda to King Constantine, in Several Speeches  
before the Greek Parliament, an Address to the King and in a

Proclamation to the Greek People

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## INTRODUCTION

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At the period when El. K. Venizelos first made his appearance as a leading figure in the political arena of Greece, that country was in a state of complete international isolation, due principally to her weakness, but also, in a great measure, to her lack of a clearly defined foreign policy, of knowing exactly what she wanted and preparing means of action adapted to the end desired.

Venizelos, as soon as he came to power, took care to bring Greece out of her isolation. After adopting a definite programme of foreign policy, he began to prepare the military force necessary for the carrying out of this policy and at the same time to seek a rapprochement with the other Balkan states. He restored the diplomatic relations between Greece and Roumania, which at a great loss to Greek interests had been broken for many years, owing to the hasty temper of a former Greek Prime Minister, Mr. Rallis. In pursuance of

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his policy, Mr. Venizelos also concluded a defensive treaty with Bulgaria, by which that state recognized that a solution of the Cretan question favorable to Greek views did not affect Bulgarian interests, and he also negotiated a similar treaty with Serbia.

It was thus that Venizelos paved the way for the co-operation of the other Balkan states in a common war against Turkey, with whom he was in danger of engaging in a duel owing to the Cretan question. During that war, he concluded the treaty of alliance with Serbia, by which the issue of the war against Bulgaria was secured, a war that was precipitated by an attack on the part of Bulgaria. At the same time he rendered the relations between Greece and Roumania more intimate and consolidated them by a close co-operation during the negotiations for and at the conclusion of the Treaty of Bucharest.

That Treaty was one of the most glorious pages of the whole of Greek history. Through it, Greece has succeeded in rectifying almost entirely the results of political mistakes of many decades. For she dealt a terrible blow to the Bulgarian claims of supremacy in the Balkans and frustrated all successes obtained by Bulgarian policy during many years. And, what was more important, Greece came out of the Balkan War, not only materially larger, but also morally strengthened in the appreciation of the whole world, while Bulgaria, as a re-



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sult of that struggle, suffered both a moral and a material loss. On the other hand, the alliance with Serbia, which had a splendid test in the co-operation of Greece and Serbia during the war, and the friendship between Greece and Roumania, which was becoming every day more intimate, were so many guarantees against any attempt on the part of Balkan people at overturning the situation created by the Treaty of Bucharest. And the Greek domination upon the islands of the Aegean Sea, secured shortly afterwards, opened for Greece views of an eventual consummation of the work of her national restoration—a work which, according to Venizelos' plans and wishes, ought to be deferred as long as possible, so that Greece, profiting of a long period of peace, might develop the wealth and the resources of her enlarged territory.

\* \* \*

Up to that time there has been no occasion for Greece to look for co-operation with peoples outside of the Balkan states, not only because her lack of confidence in her military preparation and organization had deprived her of the prestige necessary to approach any Great Powers with a view to improving her own interests, but also because during the first Balkan war the fact had become evident that most of the questions in which Greece was interested were to be settled by the Great Pow-

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ers, inasmuch as they affected more general European interests.

It was for this reason that Venizelos while systematically maintaining the traditional friendship of Greece with the Western Powers, sought also to promote and maintain friendly relations with all the other Great Powers in order to secure, as much as possible, their support, or at least to prevent their attitude from being inimical to Greece at the time of the settlement of the questions in which Greece was interested.

But when it became evident, even after the first Balkan war, that Greece was bound to become an important Mediterranean power, the great interests of which could not be effectively protected merely through her Balkan alliances, Venizelos was quick to realize the necessity of trying to approach promptly and more closely those of the Great Powers who held a dominant position in the Mediterranean and the interests of whom did not conflict with those of Greece. Especially after the second Balkan war, to which Bulgaria had been driven by Austria-Hungary, and after the constant and open declarations by Bulgaria that the situation established by the Treaty of Bucharest did not constitute, even for the time being, the final settlement of the Balkan affairs, there remained no doubt any longer that Greece ought to look for friends and co-workers, both for the protection of her Mediterranean interests and

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for her Balkan integrity, to the camp opposed to the one with which Bulgaria was co-operating. And this precaution that Mr. Venizelos was taking was so much more imperative, because the Treaty of Bucharest had affected, not only Balkan interests, but also, unfortunately, the interests of Germanism.

Germanism, in trying to attain its great objects in the near East, has never counted upon Greece as a factor that it could co-operate with, owing to the lack of a community of interests. For it must be borne in mind that the light that guides states in their foreign policy does not flash up suddenly, but is the result of a long work performed by a community of interests that comes to exist and be maintained between such states. And the interests of Greece have been always connected and identical with those of France and England, while the tendencies of German policy have always been shown to be in favor of other states in the Balkan Peninsula.

While we have no right to criticise the German policy for looking after German interests, we have a right to do so when it crosses the limits of humanity and Christianity. And unfortunately there were such demonstrations on the part of Germans. The leader of the German military commission to Turkey himself, General Sanders von Liemann, when, on a visit through Asia Minor, he was impressed by the vigor and the power of the local Greek popu-

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lation, did not hesitate to say to the Turkish officials, even in the presence of the Greek bishop: "Why don't you get rid of these men?" And it was this German general who, seeing the Greek churches and schools and pointing them out to the Turkish officials, said to them: "As long as you allow these things to exist, you will be the slaves of the Greeks." These facts have been officially established.

And while we have such demonstrations of German intentions in Asia Minor, the German Press, and German authors likewise, did not hesitate to proclaim that "the Balkan question has not been settled by the Balkan wars, but only changed in form, and that it would be settled after new struggles, in which Bulgaria would have Turkey as an ally." Such opinions have been expressed not only in Germany by irresponsible parties, but the German ambassador at Constantinople, himself, said to foreign diplomats that "the Treaty of Bucharest must be revised, as it has been imposed by the avidity of the allied Balkan states to the detriment of Bulgaria."

It was, therefore, evident that Germanism, as soon as an opportunity offered itself, would try to overthrow the work accomplished by the Treaty of Bucharest. And the excuse therefor was offered by the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince at Serajevo. Then slavie solidarity between Russia and Serbia and deeper reasons of European equilibrium



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brought the Entente Powers face to face with Germanism, which was trying to crush Serbia and to advance into the Balkans. The position of Greece, therefore, in this great war was clearly defined, not only by her treaty with Serbia, not only by her traditional relations with the Entente Powers, which had also guaranteed her independence, but also by her own permanent interests in the Balkans, as well as in the Mediterranean and in Asia Minor.

\* \* \*

At the beginning of the European war Venizelos outlined a clear and steady policy for Greece, which may be summarized as follows: a benevolent neutrality towards her ally, Serbia, and, therefore, towards the Entente; an open declaration that an attack by Bulgaria against Serbia would be followed immediately by the intervention of Greece against Bulgaria; a watchful waiting, in order that no increase of the rival states might result from the war without a corresponding increase for Greece, and, after Turkey's entrance into the war, an effort to obtain recognition and realization of Greek claims upon western Asia Minor.

This policy of Venizelos has been crowned by a complete success. Greece has been able, remaining neutral, while the rest of Europe was engaged in the war, to reoccupy northern Epirus, from which she had been compelled to retire six months before, as a result

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of a unanimous European mandate. And this reoccupation has been made by Greece with the consent of four of the Great Powers and with the toleration of the other two Powers. At the same time Greece by her resolute attitude has been able to prevent Bulgaria from attacking Serbia, as Bulgaria did not dare to proceed to such an attack, even after the second Austrian invasion of Serbia, when it was thought, for a moment, after the occupation of Belgrade, that Serbia has been decisively defeated. But the crowning success of Venizelos' foreign policy during the European war was the confidential communication by which Sir Edward Grey advised Mr. Venizelos that if Greece would place her army on the side of the Entente Powers, they were willing to recognize in her favor very important territorial concessions in Asia Minor. Here is the text of that very important communication:

*January 23rd, 1915.*

*Sir Edward Grey*

*To Sir F. Elliot.*

*You are requested to converse informally with Mr. Venizelos in the sense of the following:*

*Pending a serious attempt on the part of Austria to crush Serbia, it is of the utmost importance that all who can should help Serbia. If Greece will side with Serbia, as her ally, and*

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*participate in the war, I know that France and Russia will both willingly recognize to Greece very important territorial concessions on the coasts of Asia Minor, and if Mr. Venizelos desires under these conditions a definite understanding, he ought to communicate without delay with the Governments of England, France and Russia, and I am sure that any proposition that he might offer would be very favorably received.*

*The matter is urgent, for if Serbia is defeated, although this would not change the possible prospect of defeat of Austria and Germany, nevertheless there would supervene, during the war, accomplished facts in the Balkans that would render it very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain for Greece and Serbia such favorable results as are in prospect to-day.*

*On the contrary, the immediate participation of Greece and Roumania in the war would make certain a new defeat of Austria, would bring about the failure of the attempt to crush Serbia and would create the certainty that these three states, Greece, Roumania and Serbia, would realize their views and would be masters of the situation in their neighborhood. In order that this participation may be effective, it is very desirable that Bulgaria be assured that if the views of Serbia and Greece are satisfied elsewhere, she would obtain satisfactory territorial concessions in Macedonia, under condition of her participating in the war, or at*

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*least that she would not maintain an attitude of unfavorable neutrality, in case she would not decide actively to fight by the side of Serbia.*

*This matter is of a special interest to Serbia and is to be made a subject of negotiations at Nish. You will converse with Mr. Venizelos upon it in order only to ask him not to object to concessions which Serbia might be disposed to make to Bulgaria, on condition that Serbia would realize the slavic views towards the Adriatic.*

\* \* \*

In her long history, Greece has seldom found herself in the presence of an international declaration furthering to such a great extent her national interests. Three of the Great European Powers were recognizing her national views upon Asia Minor, and while their extent had not been defined in geographical terms, Mr. Venizelos was distinctly invited to try to obtain their definition, and a positive promise was given that "any proposition on his part would be very favorably received."

Mr. Venizelos was so careful and practical in handling the great national questions of Greece that he thought he could not accept that proposition; for by sending away the Greek army to the assistance of the Serbians near the Danube he would have exposed Greece to the danger of a Bulgarian invasion, which by sever-



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ing the communications of both the Greek and the Serbian army with Salonica, might have exposed both of them to destruction. Before accepting that proposition, therefore, Mr. Venizelos tried to secure the co-operation of Roumania, in which case the Bulgarian danger would have been removed, and, having failed in that attempt, he sought to obtain the co-operation of Bulgaria. And, knowing the importance that such co-operation would have had, not only locally, in the Balkans, but also in the issue of the whole war, he did not hesitate to pay the price, as long as he was to get ample compensation elsewhere, in exchange for it. He, therefore, submitted to King Constantine, in two Memoranda, now become famous, the suggestion that Greece should declare to the Entente Powers that she would be willing to relinquish in favor of Bulgaria the districts of Cavalla, Drama and Sari-Samban, in Macedonia, in order to secure Bulgaria's co-operation in an attack against Turkey, provided that the concessions to be made to Greece in Asia Minor should be of such an extent, as to bring about the creation of an Asiatic Greece equally large and wealthier than European Greece.

\* \* \*

When, in the first part of February, 1915, an Allied fleet began an attack against the Dardanelles, Mr. Venizelos thought that the time had arrived for Greece to abandon neu-

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trality and, entering the war on the side of the Allies, to assist with her army in the capture of the Dardanelles. He, therefore, submitted to the King of Greece such a proposition for his sanction.

Unfortunately, at this most critical period of the national life of Greece, King Constantine, contrary to all expectations and despite the unanimous opinion, at the time, of the Crown Council, which has approved of Venizelos' policy and recommended its adoption, dissented from his great adviser, on the ground that the interests of Greece demanded that she should remain neutral.

In the face of such a disagreement with the Crown, Mr. Venizelos was compelled to resign from office and Mr. Gounaris, a representative in Parliament from the district of Patras and a prominent figure among Mr. Venizelos' political opponents, came forward and expressed his willingness to support and undertake to carry out the King's policy. Thereupon, Mr. Gounaris formed a new Cabinet and proceeded to the dissolution of Parliament, and thus the Greek people were invited to express their opinion upon the policy that was to be followed by Greece in the European War.

During the period prior to the elections, the Gounaris Cabinet, supported by the General Staff of the Greek Army, which shared the royal policy, if it had not itself suggested it to the King, had attempted by various means to

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influence the opinion of the Greek people, whom they tried to intimidate by representing the German army as invincible and by intimating that Greece was threatened with disaster, if she should depart from neutrality and side with the Allies against the Germans.

Despite all these efforts, the Greek people, mindful of their traditions and equal to their historic mission, have not been misled either by insinuations or by attempts at intimidation, for at the elections which were held on the 31st of May, 1915, they triumphantly expressed their approval of Mr. Venizelos' platform, by electing with great majorities the candidates of the Liberal Party, of which Venizelos was the leader. As a result of these elections the Liberals constituted almost the two-thirds of the entire membership of the new Parliament.

After that verdict of the Greek people, the Gounaris Cabinet, instead of immediately resigning, according to parliamentary custom, and giving their place to the man chosen by the people, not only failed to do so, but remained in power and intentionally postponed, in violation of the Constitution, the calling of the new Parliament in session, under the pretext that the condition of the health of the King—who had an attack of pleurisy at the time—did not permit him to attend to a change of cabinet. At that time it became evident that there was an intention of imposing the King's opinion, even by a violation of the Constitution.

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But inasmuch as the expression of the opinion and of the decision of the Greek people was still very recent, the Gounaris cabinet did not dare to go any further on the unconstitutional road, and when finally Parliament was called in session and Venizelos' great majority became evident, they were compelled to resign from office.

\* \* \*

The King then called Venizelos to office again, and there was a general expectation that the King, bowing to the verdict of the people, would allow their chosen leader to carry out his policy.

That expectation did not materialize, however. Only one month later, when Venizelos, after a mobilization by Bulgaria, which was evidently aimed at Serbia, asked, in conformity with obligations of alliance, to go to the assistance of Serbia, even by declaring war, in case of necessity, against Bulgaria, King Constantine again disagreed with Venizelos and asserted that the treaty with Serbia did not bind Greece to come to her assistance when she was at war, not only with Bulgaria, but also with the Teutonic Powers. Venizelos, although he had the confidence of Parliament, in the face of this new disagreement with the Crown, offered his resignation and relinquished power to Mr. Alexander Zaimis, to whom the King entrusted the forma-



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tion of a new cabinet. Venizelos tolerated this cabinet for some time and lent it his support in Parliament. But when he realized that they were taking advantage of his toleration, that the Minister of War, General Ghiannakitsas, having become a tool of the General Staff, was behaving towards the National Representation in an insulting manner, Venizelos was compelled to withdraw his support, and then the Zaimis cabinet, having been defeated in Parliament, resigned. Thereupon, King Constantine entrusted Mr. Scouloudis with the formation of a new cabinet, dissolved Parliament and called the people to new elections.

Venizelos, considering that the dissolution of Parliament, under those conditions, was unconstitutional, refused together with his friends to participate in those elections, so that, there being no opposition, by the vote of only a small part of the Greek people, all the Government candidates were elected, these men being also supporters of the royal policy, which the Government was trying to carry out.

\* \* \*

We do not wish to go into details concerning the work of this spurious Parliament or concerning the results of the policy of the Scouloudis cabinet, or rather of the policy that was only carried out by that cabinet, but which really was the policy of King Constantine,—a policy that was contrary to the expressed will

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and opinion of the great majority of the Greek people, a policy that was contrary to the sentiments, to the traditions and to the interests of the Greek Nation. It is sufficient for us to state that by the application of that policy Greece, which during the first year of the European War was strong and much sought after and respected by both the belligerent combinations, sank now to such a degree of weakness and misery and anarchy as to invite the contempt of her enemies and the pity of her friends and former admirers.

But, as we have already stated, we do not desire to enter into the details of King Constantine's policy, neither shall we try to explain the motives and the ulterior objects of that policy. At any rate, that is not the object of this book. The object of this book is to offer the American public the opportunity and the means of knowing more completely and in all its details the policy pursued in the European War by Eleutherios Venizelos, the genuine representative of the Greek people. The reader will see that policy fully explained in the following pages, containing Mr. Venizelos' two Memoranda to the King of Greece and also a number of speeches by Mr. Venizelos before the Greek Parliament, as well as his latest speech, delivered only a few weeks ago to the people of Athens and by them unanimously adopted and presented to King Constantine in the form of resolutions; also Mr. Venizelos'

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proclamation to the Greek people issued at Canea, Crete, Sept. 14, 1916. We hope that the reading of all these documents will win the admiration of the readers for the greatest of Greek statesmen and will also make them sympathize with the Greek people, whom they will find to be fully conscious of their obligations to Liberty, to Civilization and to their own honor and dignity.

If these two results are obtained, the object of this book will be accomplished, and its publishers will feel that they have been amply repaid for their little efforts.

New York, November, 1916.





## **PART I**

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**Venizelos Advising the King of Greece**



## FIRST MEMORANDUM TO KING CONSTANTINE

---

**How Mr. Venizelos Advised King Constantine**

Athens, January 11, 1915.

Your Majesty,—

I now have the honor to submit to your Majesty the contents of a communication which the British Minister here made to me with instructions from Sir Edward Grey.

Greece, by his communication, is again confronted with one of the most critical periods in the history of the nation. Until to-day our policy simply consisted in the preservation of neutrality, in so far as our treaty obligation with Serbia did not oblige us to depart therefrom. But we are now called upon to participate in the war, no longer in order to fulfil simply moral obligations, but in view of compensations, which if realized will create a great and powerful Greece, such as not even the boldest optimist could have imagined only a few years back.

In order to obtain these great compensations great dangers will certainly have to be faced. But after long and careful study of the question

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I end with the opinion that we ought to face these dangers.

We ought to face them chiefly because, even though we were to take no part in the war now, and to endeavor to preserve our neutrality until the end, we should find ourselves exposed to dangers equally serious.

If we allow Serbia to be crushed to-day by another Austro-German invasion, we have no security whatever that the Austro-German armies will stop short in front of our Macedonian frontiers, and that they will not be tempted as a matter of course to come down as far as Salonica. But even if this danger is averted, and we admit that Austria, being satisfied with a crushing military defeat of Serbia, will not wish to establish herself in Macedonia, is there any possible doubt that Bulgaria, at the invitation of Austria, will advance and occupy Serbian Macedonia? And if that were to happen, what would be our position? We should then be obliged, in accordance with our treaty of alliance, to hasten to the aid of Serbia unless we wished to incur the dishonor of disregarding our treaty obligations. Even if we were to remain indifferent to our moral debasement and impassive, we should by so doing have to submit to the disturbance of the Balkan equilibrium in favor of Bulgaria. That Power, thus strengthened, would either now or some time hence be in a position to attack us, when we



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should be entirely without either a friend or an ally. If, on the other hand, we had, in the circumstances indicated, to go to help Serbia in order to fulfil the duty incumbent on us, we should do so in far more unfavorable circumstances than if we went to her assistance now, because Serbia would already be crushed, and in consequence our aid would be of no, or at best of very little avail. Moreover, by rejecting now the overtures of the Powers of the Triple Entente, even in the event of victory we should secure no tangible compensation for our support in their struggle.

Let us now examine under what circumstances we ought to take part in the contest. Above all we must seek the cooperation not only of Roumania, but if possible of Bulgaria as well.

If we should succeed in obtaining this co-operation through an alliance of all the Christian States of the Balkans, not only would every serious danger of local defeat be averted, but their participation would bring a most important influence to bear on the struggle of the Entente Powers. For it is no exaggeration to say that their participation would exercise an important influence in favor of the ascendancy of the latter.

In order that this may be brought about, I think we should make adequate concessions to Bulgaria. So far we have refused even to discuss any concessions whatever by us to Bulgaria.

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Not only that but we have declared that we should emphatically oppose any important concessions by Serbia which might disturb the balance of power established in the Balkans by the Treaty of Bucharest.

So far this policy has obviously been the only one to follow.

But now matters have changed. The instant that visions open out for the realization of our national aims in Asia Minor, it becomes possible to consider some concessions in the Balkans in order to secure the success of such a far-reaching national policy. To begin with we should withdraw our objections to concessions on the part of Serbia to Bulgaria, even if these concessions extend to the right bank of the Axios (Vardar), and if these concessions do not suffice to induce Bulgaria to co-operate with her former Allies, or at least to induce her to extend a benevolent neutrality to them, I would not hesitate, however painful the severance, to recommend the sacrifice of Cavalla, in order to save Hellenism in Turkey, and with a view to create a real *Magna Graecia* which would include nearly all the provinces where Hellenism flourished through the long centuries of its history.

This sacrifice, however, would not merely be the price of Bulgaria's neutrality, but would be in exchange for the active participation of Bulgaria in the war with the other Allies. If this

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suggestion of mine were accepted, the Powers of the Triple Entente should guarantee that Bulgaria would undertake to buy the property of all those inhabitants of this ceded district who wish to emigrate within the boundaries of Greece. At the same time it would be agreed that the Greek population living within the boundaries of Bulgaria should be interchanged with Bulgarian population living within the boundaries of Greece, each State respectively buying their properties. It would be understood that this interchange of population and the purchase of their properties would be carried out by a Commission consisting of five members, one member to be appointed severally by England, France, Russia, Greece and Bulgaria. The actual cession of Cavalla would only take effect after the fulfillment of all these conditions. In this way a definite ethnological settlement in the Balkans would be arrived at and the idea of a confederation could be realized, or, at any rate, an Alliance with mutual guarantees between the States which would allow them to devote themselves to their economic and other developments, without being primarily absorbed almost exclusively in the task of strengthening their military organization.

At the same time, as a partial compensation for this concession, one would ask that, if Bulgaria extend beyond the Axios, the Doiran-Ghevgeli

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district should be ceded to us by Serbia, so that at least we could acquire, as to Bulgaria, an adequate boundary, since we should be deprived of the present excellent one to the east (of Greek Macedonia).

Unfortunately, on account of Bulgaria's greed, it is not at all certain that, whatever concession we make, we shall be able to satisfy Bulgaria, and lead her to co-operate with her former allies. If we cannot obtain Bulgaria's co-operation, then it would be important that we should at least secure Roumania's co-operation, for without this co-operation our joining in the war would be hazardous.

My opinion that we should respond to the suggestion put before your Majesty, with a view to our participation in the war, is also actuated by other motives. In fact, if we remain impassive spectators of the present struggle we not only run the above-mentioned dangers, which the crushing of Serbia will create against us. For, even if a fresh invasion of Serbia were abandoned and Austria, with Germany, should turn their efforts to coming out victorious in the two principal theatres of the war, in Poland and in Flanders, again the danger for us would be great, first, because if they were victorious they would be able to impose the same changes on the Balkans which I have previously indicated as possible results in the event of Serbia's defeat.



## GREECE IN HER TRUE LIGHT

Beyond that, their victory would mean the death-blow to the free life of all small States, besides the direct damage which we would suffer through the loss of the islands (the Sporades). And again, if the war did not end by a decisive superiority either of the one or the other, but by a return of the *status quo ante bellum*, still, after such a conclusion of the war, swift and sure would come the complete destruction of Hellenism in Turkey. Turkey coming out invulnerable from a war which she had braved against the three big Powers, and emboldened by the feeling of security which her alliance with Germany would give her—an alliance which clearly will last in the future, for such seems Germany's aim—will complete at once and systematically the work of destroying Hellenism in Turkey, driving out the population without pretext and in masses, and appropriating their possessions. In this she will not only find no opposition from Germany, but will be strengthened by her, inasmuch as Germany will be glad to get rid of a competitor for Asia Minor which she (Germany) covets. The driving away in masses of hundreds of thousands of Greeks living in Turkey will not only destroy these, but drag down in financial ruin the whole of Greece.

On account of all these reasons I conclude our participation in the struggle, under the above conditions, to be absolutely imperative.

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It is fraught, as I previously stated, with serious danger. But, unfortunately, for us to keep any longer aloof offers also grave danger, as I have said above. As against the dangers to which we shall expose ourselves in taking part in the war, the expectation soars above all—a legitimate expectation, I hope—that we may save the greater part of Hellenism in Turkey, and that we may create a great and powerful Greece. And even if we do not succeed, we shall at least have our conscience at peace with the conviction that we have struggled to save our race from slavery, that worst of dangers, and fought for the good of humanity and for the liberty of small nations, which German and Turkish rule would irretrievably endanger. And last, even if we fail, we shall preserve the esteem and friendship of powerful nations—those, indeed, who created Greece and so often since have helped and supported her. While our refusal to fulfill our obligations to our ally Serbia would not only destroy our moral standing as a State, and would not only expose us to the above dangers, but would leave us without friends, and destroy all trust in us in the future.

Under these conditions our national life would be endangered.

Your Majesty's most obedient servant,

EL. K. VENIZELOS.

## SECOND MEMORANDUM

### TO KING CONSTANTINE

---

Your Majesty,

Your Majesty has already been informed of the answer of the Roumanian Government to our proposal for joint action in aid of Serbia. This answer signifies, I think, that Roumania will refuse joint military action with us so long as Bulgaria will not share therein. Even if it were possible that Roumania would be satisfied with an official declaration of neutrality by Bulgaria towards a joint Græco-Roumanian action with the Serbians, it is altogether unlikely that such an official declaration by Bulgaria could be obtained. Moreover, the General Staff does not seem to be altogether satisfied about the safety of Græco-Roumanian-Serbian co-operation so long as Bulgaria stands apart, even after a declaration of neutrality which she could easily break directly she found an advantage in doing so.

Matters being as they are, I think that the time has come to face with decision the problem of necessary sacrifices so that we may obtain, if possible, a Pan-Balkan co-operation in sharing

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jointly in the war. Such an action taken in common by the nations of the Balkans would not only secure for them in any event a local ascendancy in the southern theatre of the war, but would furnish a weighty reinforcement to the Powers of the Triple Entente, sufficient probably to turn the scale definitely in their favor in the awful struggle now being carried on.

The cession of Cavalla is assuredly a grievous sacrifice, and I feel in putting it forward a sense of very heavy and heart-felt anguish. But I do not hesitate to propose it as soon as I take in view what the racial compensations are that can be secured to us by this sacrifice.

I feel that the concessions in Asia Minor suggested by Sir Edward Grey can, especially if we submit to sacrifices to Bulgaria, assume such an extent that Greece, already doubled by victorious wars from which she has emerged, would have added to her yet another Greece as great and not less rich. I believe that if we were to ask for the portion of Asia Minor lying westward of a line which, beginning from Cape Phineka in the south, runs through the mountains Ak-Dagh, Kistel-Dagh, Karli-Dagh, Anamus Dagh, to the Sultan-Dagh and thence through Kessir-Dagh, Tourman-Dagh, Gessil-Dagh, Doumanitsa-Dagh, Mysian Olympus and would end in the Gulf of Adramyti—so long as an outlet were not permitted to us to the Propontis—it would be very

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probable that our request would be granted. The surface of this country exceeds by a rough calculation 125,000 square kilometres and therefore the extent of Hellas as doubled by the wars.

The portion to be conceded by us (The Kazas, Sharishambant, Cavalla and Drama) has not a surface of more than two thousand square kilometers. In extent then it scarcely represents the sixtieth of what we may possibly get in exchange in Asia Minor, even without taking into consideration the concession of Doiran-Ghevgeli which we should also demand. It is true that the value of the rich district under consideration is very great, and altogether out of proportion to its extent; but it is clear that it cannot be compared to the value of the portion of Asia Minor, the concession of which we propose to secure. Even of greater importance is the surrender of Greek population in the ceded district. But if this Hellenic population can be reckoned at 30,000 souls, the Greek population of the portion of Asia Minor claimed by us amounts to more than 800,000 souls; that is to say, more than twenty-five times as many as the number given up.

Furthermore as I have already explained in my former memorandum, the cession of the district Drama-Cavalla would be under the distinct condition that the Bulgarian Government would buy up the properties of all those who wish to



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emigrate from the ceded part. Nor do I doubt that all our countrymen in this district would to a man sell their properties and hasten to emigrate to the new Hellas to be created in Asia Minor, increasing and strengthening the Hellenic population there.

Under such a condition, your Majesty, it is my firm conviction that we ought to lay all hesitation aside.

It would be difficult, and altogether unlikely that such an opportunity as appears to-day should present itself again to Hellenism of establishing a complete national settlement.

If we do not take part in the war, whatever may be its result, in all human probability Hellenism in Asia Minor is definitely lost to us. For if the Triple Entente should conquer, its Powers will divide, either among themselves or together with Italy, Asia Minor and the rest of Turkey; and if Germany, together with Turkey, should conquer, not only will the 200,000 Greeks already expelled from Asia Minor have no hope of returning to their homes, but the number of those expelled will have still greater additions. In any event the domination of Germanism will secure for itself the absorption of the whole of Asia Minor.

How then is it possible, things being so, for us to allow this opportunity supplied by Divine Providence to pass—the opportunity of realizing

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our most daring national ideals? It is an opportunity of creating a Hellas including near all the lands in which Hellenism prevailed during its long life history; a Hellas including extents of the greatest fertility, and assuring for us hegemony in the Aegean Sea.

The members of the General Staff seem, curiously enough, not strongly attracted by these prospects. They fear, so they say, on the one side difficulty in governing so great an extent of new country, and on the other, lest through our sharing in the war we should be more exhausted than the Bulgarians, and they should take advantage of our exhaustion after the war to attack us.

The first difficulty no one can ignore, but I think that this difficulty cannot lead us to resign the realization of the ideals of our race in face of the unique opportunity which is presented to us to-day. Moreover, the results, which on the whole have been obtained by Hellenic Government in Macedonia prove that, in spite of many difficulties, such a work does not exceed the powers of Hellas and Hellenism.

The second fear is less justified. The Balkan Wars have proved that we are not reduced by exertion more quickly than the Bulgarians.

It is, however, true that for some term of years, until, that is to say, we organize the whole of our military power upon the basis of the supply

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of men which the conscription in greater Greece will give us, we shall in the event of war in the Balkan Peninsula find ourselves in need of devoting part of our forces in Asia Minor to guard against any possible local rising there. Such a rising, however, would be altogether unlikely since the Ottoman State being altogether out of account, our Moslem subjects will be excellent and law-abiding citizens. Moreover any force engaged there will be supplied within a very short space of time by the Hellenic population of Asiatic Hellas. And then it is easy to assure ourselves against all danger from Bulgaria by arranging an oral agreement with the Powers of the Triple Alliance, upon the basis of which they should help us, if during the period aforesaid we were to be attacked by Bulgaria.

For my part I think that even without such an agreement we should have nothing to fear as regards Bulgaria after a successful result of a war in which we have shared. Bulgaria would herself be busied in the organization of new provinces which she would gain. And if Heaven should make her insane enough to wish to attack us, there is no doubt that Serbia, which has a binding obligation of alliance with us and reasons for gratitude on account of our behavior towards her, and which will take very hardly the loss of Macedonia to Bulgaria, will co-operate with us, so that once more we should bring down

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Bulgaria's arrogant pride, and confine her within bounds which will make her harmless for the future.

It is to be noted, moreover, as regards the concession of Cavalla, that there exists no assurance that Bulgaria will agree to the abandonment of her neutrality to take common action with us and the Serbians. It is likely that she will put forward a claim, either to get these concessions simply as an exchange for her neutrality, or to get them at once, before the end of the war, and independently of results proceeding from it.

Neither of these conditions should we be able to accept. But if our sharing in the war should be nullified by the action of the Bulgarians, we should preserve entirely the friendship and sympathy of the Powers of the Triple Alliance. And if even in the event of their prevailing, we should not be able to expect such a concession as would be given us in exchange for taking part in the war, we might, nevertheless, safely expect that our interests would meet with their sympathetic support, and that necessary financial help after the war would not be lacking for us.

I should further add, that the whole progress of affairs and the proposal that very wide territorial concessions to us in Asia Minor should be recognized proves to me without the slightest doubt that the activity which has been displayed

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by New Hellas has attracted to her the confidence of certain Powers which consider her as an important factor in the settlement of the Near East at the moment of the collapse of the Turkish State.

The support of these Powers will supply us with all economic and diplomatic means for facing every difficulty naturally proceeding from so sudden an increase of our territory.

Based upon this support, Greece will be able to step forward firmly in a new and marvellous path of progress open before her.

To your Majesty, still happily in the prime of manhood, will be given not only to create by your sword the greater Hellas, but to confirm your military success by a complete political organization of the new State. To you will be given to transmit it to your successor, when the fullness of time demands, and when you have finished a work of such magnitude, as has been given to few kings to achieve.

Your Majesty's most obedient servant,

EL. K. VENIZELOS.



## **PART II**

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**Venizelos expounding his policy before the  
Greek Parliament**



## FIRST SPEECH

Delivered in the House of Representatives,  
September 21, 1915

[After the mobilization of the Bulgarian army, in September, 1915, Venizelos, who was then at the head of the Greek Government, ordered a general mobilization of the Greek army with the object of being ready to assist Serbia, according to the Treaty of alliance between her and Greece, in case Serbia was attacked by Bulgaria. At that time an Allied force had landed at Salonica and Venizelos, considering that Bulgaria was not yet at war with Serbia, made only a formal protest over the landing of the Allied troops. The Opposition in the Greek Parliament, however, profited by this opportunity to attack the Government not only upon the question of the landing of the Allied forces, but also upon its general policy. Venizelos, in answering those attacks by the Opposition, made the following speech, which is an exhaustive and comprehensive discussion of the foreign policy of Greece, as it was affected at the time by the whole Balkan and European situation.]

Gentlemen, if only the Honorable Representative from Attica (\*) had taken the floor, I would not have answered him, because what he said intended principally to render stronger the protest

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(\*) A few of the more prominent representatives in the Greek Parliament are either personally addressed or referred to by Mr. Venizelos in the course of these Speeches, and Mr. Venizelos, following the parliamentary custom, designates them not by their names, but by the districts from which they were elected. Thus the "Deputy from Attica" is Mr. D. Rallis, a former Premier. The "Deputy from Patras" is Mr. D. Gounaris, another former Premier and at one time the most prominent amongst Mr. Venizelos' political opponents. The "Deputy from Corfu" is Mr. George Theotokis also a former Premier, now dead.

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made by the Government, by confirming the fact that not only the Government, but the Opposition, was sharing this protest. As the Honorable Representative from Attica said a little while ago, on these questions it is permitted, if not incumbent upon everybody to be sensitive and even oversensitive. But if I take the floor, I do so because those that have spoken before did not confine themselves to this subject only, that is, to generalizing the protest made by the Government, but took up other matters, too. And I must admit that very seldom has the Greek Parliament in its whole history been confronted with a situation more serious, or more important, and very seldom in this chamber has there been carried on a discussion of greater importance and one more intimately connected with the very future of this Country and of our Nation. But before I enter into the more general part of my speech, in order to answer the other previous speakers, I wish to say two words in answer to the speech made by the Honorable Deputy from Attica.

He reminded us, aiming, I think, also at a criticism, on this point, of the policy of the Government and of its tendencies, he reminded us that the Powers of the Triple Alliance and now Quadruple Alliance demanded concessions from us in Macedonia during the summer of the present year.

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### **The Question of Concessions.**

In the first place, in order to establish the facts in their true light, in order that the representatives of the Country may know what has been then done, I deem it my duty to remind you that the Powers came forward and persistently advised the Greek Government to consent to concessions in Macedonia, in exchange for other great and important concessions in Asia Minor.

I have further to add that at the time when I retired from power in the month of February, I left to the succeeding Cabinet a foreign situation under which the Powers of the Triple Alliance were promising very extensive territorial concessions in Asia Minor, without asking for any counter-concessions on the part of Greece, because long before they had promised the Greek Government that they would not ask for any such concessions from her in favor of Bulgaria.

They only asked, in return for those very extensive concessions in Asia Minor, that we might withdraw the objections we had formulated from the beginning against concessions on the part of Serbia in favor of Bulgaria, concessions that could not have been made without our consent, especially on account of our Treaty of Alliance with Serbia, concessions to which we had declared at the beginning of the war that we objected. I hope that the Honorable Deputy from Attica will



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realize that it is not I who can or must explain why after the resignation of the Cabinet under me things have been so changed, that concessions have been demanded from Greece.

At any rate, what I have to add in connection with this incidental question in order to close it, is that I find myself to-day in the happy position of communicating to Parliament the fact that not only, at least since the Cabinet under me has been holding office again, did the Powers not speak of any concessions on the part of Greece to Bulgaria, but that positive and official assurances were offered that the promises about concessions to Bulgaria, even on the part of Serbia, were already considered null and void. (Applause.)

Before entering into the main discussion, I want also to answer, in a few words, the Honorable Deputy from Patras. I am sorry that I cannot agree with him. Certainly every representative has a right to talk from this tribune, on every subject which he thinks may interest the National Assembly. But it has been sanctioned by a long tradition that the Government is not obliged even to explain the reason why they do not answer, when invited to a discussion of the foreign affairs of the Country by others than the leaders of the Parliamentary parties.

This, gentlemen, does not constitute an impairment of the rights of any member of Parlia-

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ment. Of course, each deputy has an unlimited right to talk about foreign matters and it is his business to succeed in attracting the interest of Parliament and to move its soul sufficiently to compel the Government not to keep silent, even though the speech was not made by one of those who, according to established parliamentary practice, are authorized to ask such questions.

### **The Bulgarian Mobilization.**

As soon as the Bulgarian mobilization was ordered it was natural that I should be asked by the representatives of the foreign States here what the policy of the Greek Government was intended to be. I stated from the first moment, when the intended partial mobilization of Bulgaria became known, that it would be followed by a partial Greek mobilization, and when the general Bulgarian mobilization was known, I stated that on the same day, before the lapse of twenty-four hours from the Bulgarian mobilization, the decree of the general Greek mobilization would be issued.

But at the same time, gentlemen, it was my duty to watch also the developments which were natural to follow after the mobilization. I, gentlemen, have never concealed the fact, for even a moment, while I was holding office up to February, and since I came back to power, I have

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never ceased to state that I considered the obligations of alliance with Serbia as always binding, and that I intended to respect them, as long as I had the honor and responsibility of the government of the Country. But I knew that certain circles, the opinion of which, from a military point of view, deserves great attention, held that, inasmuch as the military convention with Serbia which determined the manner of co-operation of the two armies, the Greek and the Serbian, in case of war against Bulgaria, provided a fixed force to be disposed by Serbia for the conduct of the common struggle, the lack of that force, on account of the Serbian Army's being engaged elsewhere, rendered our action quite perilous. I, therefore, asked the representatives of certain Powers whether, in case of Serbia's being attacked by Bulgaria, when, according to my opinion the stipulation of the treaty would be in force, those Powers would be disposed to make up the missing military force, the one, that is to say, which Serbia could possibly not dispose of to repel a Bulgarian invasion, because her army was facing another front. And I have had the answer that that force could be put at the disposal of Greece, the moment the stipulation of the treaty became operative. And at the same time I said that there should be no misunderstanding on account of that, for I did not propose that force to be sent in order to undertake new obligations, but

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I only wanted to know whether, under that definite presupposition of the occurrence of the contingency mentioned in the treaty, that force could be disposed of, for that, of course, was an element from which certain circles which are called upon to have an opinion on such matters, could form their convictions.

### **The Treaty of Alliance Between Greece and Serbia.**

And now, gentlemen, I come to the main part of the discussion, the like of which, as I said in the beginning, I think seldom has been conducted by the Greek Parliament. Justly did the Honorable Deputy from Corfu and the Honorable Deputy from Arcadia who spoke after him, both try to call the Parliament's attention to the treaty of Alliance with Serbia. It is impossible for the National Representation and for the Country to judge the present conditions correctly, if they do not know exactly what the terms of the Alliance with Serbia are, in regard to the obligation of each of the States to come to the assistance of the other. I regret that to-day I cannot satisfy the request, which I think is reasonable, of the Honorable Deputy from Arcadia that I bring before the National Representation the very text of the Treaty. I cannot do this to-day, but I hope that I shall be able to do so



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very soon, as I have asked just now the permission of the Serbian Government to make the text of the treaty public.

This permission is indispensably necessary to me, for, according to an express stipulation of that treaty, no publication of it can be made without the common accord of both contracting governments. But if I cannot publish to-day the text of the treaty, I have both the duty and the right to communicate to Parliament those parts of the treaty—the most important, in fact—which are to-day occupying our attention and on which the conscientious opinion of the representatives of the country depends about the questions before us.

The treaty with Serbia, gentlemen, the Treaty of Alliance is the only one; there were no two treaties made, one before the war against Bulgaria and another after it, as the Honorable Deputy from Kozana thought. The treaty of alliance is the one that was concluded about one month before the outbreak of the war against Bulgaria, exactly upon the anticipation of that war, and it is of ten years' duration, for the service of the more general interests of the two States. At this moment I think I have no longer the right to conceal from the National Representation and from the Country the information that our Treaty of Alliance with Serbia is a defensive treaty, on the strength of which either



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of the States is obliged to come to the assistance of the other, if without provocation on its part it is attacked by a third party.

On the strength of this treaty, gentlemen, when in May of last year our relations with the Turkish Empire reached the breaking point, we addressed ourselves to Serbia and explained the reasons why we were confronting a new war against Turkey, a war which we considered, even if we began first, would be for Greece a defensive war, because the provocations from the other side had become unbearable. On the strength, I say, of that treaty we addressed ourselves to Serbia to ask for her assistance, in the event that while conducting that war, we were attacked by another State.

When, gentlemen, the great European War which is shaking all the world, both civilized and uncivilized, broke out, I was in Munich on my way to Brussels, where a meeting had been arranged with the Grand Vizier of Turkey for an understanding and solution of the question of the Islands. There a telegram reached me from Mr. Pasitch, announcing the war and asking what the attitude of Greece would be in the presence of that war, in connection with the Treaty of Alliance. I replied to Mr. Pasitch from there that I could not give a definite answer before I had returned to Athens, had called a meeting of the Cabinet and had asked after-

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wards the King's opinion. But I thought it was incumbent upon me not to leave the Prime Minister of the Allied State in doubt, as to my individual opinion at least, during the five or six days which would be necessary for me to reach Athens. I, therefore, answered him by telegraph that I could not yet give an answer binding Greece, but I communicated to him that the opinion which I was going to introduce to the Council of Ministers and to submit to the King's approval was this: That Greece cannot assist Serbia in the European War just beginning; she can render Serbia, on the strength of the treaty only one service, and that a valuable one, to stand armed and to declare that if Bulgaria attacks Serbia, Greece will attack Bulgaria; that was the assistance, which an interpretation of the treaty in good faith imposed upon Greece to render Serbia. Sending the army of Greece to the center of Europe would not, of course, be a sober enterprise, especially at the moment when from the right flank the main enemy would be standing ready to attack and destroy both the Greek and Serbian armies by cutting their communications with Salonica.

When I returned to Athens this opinion, which was approved by the Council of Ministers and by his Majesty the King, was communicated as the official answer to the question of the Allied State, and the Allied State declared it fully realized

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that such assistance, rendered by Greece to Serbia, fully met the obligations undertaken, when carried out by us in good faith.

And for this reason, gentlemen, no complaint has been made against Greece, officially at least, for misinterpretation of the treaty, and I believe that nobody in this chamber would think of taking the Government to task for its success in having the treaty interpreted by both parties in such manner. In this opinion, gentlemen, the Government under my presidency remained unshaken, until it left power. But it is a curious thing that not only my Government has this opinion of the obligations of Greece arising out of the Treaty of Alliance, but that nobody else who can speak with authority about the political affairs of the Country has formulated, until recently at least, a contrary opinion.

But, as I said, gentlemen, that was not only the opinion of the Government under my presidency from the beginning of the European War, as to our obligations arising from the treaty; that was also the opinion of the Government which succeeded me in February, 1915, of the Government under the Honorable Deputy from Patras, which in its official statement, on assuming power, said the following:

“But at the same time a supreme duty imposes upon the Country the reservation that it will carry out the obligations undertaken by treaty.”

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### **The Observance of the Stipulations of the Treaty.**

You see, then, that the other Government which succeeded mine in power and became familiar with the official documents, in its first statement, declared as the principal object of its policy the carrying out and the respect of the obligations undertaken by the Treaty of Alliance.

But also when I resumed power after the elections, it was natural that I should continue to have the same conception of the force of the stipulation of the Treaty of Alliance and of the respect due it on our part. And when Mr. Pasitch, being pressed lately to consent to concessions to Bulgaria, in order that Bulgaria might not take a hostile attitude towards Serbia, when, I say, Mr. Pasitch, being pressed, was compelled to address himself to the Greek Government and ask for its consent to grant those concessions, the Greek Government, under certain definite presuppositions, consented to the concessions, and it was evident that this action of the Greek Government constituted a new confirmation of the continuation and force of that Treaty of Alliance. I can assure the Parliament, gentlemen, that from the first moment of the outbreak of the European War there never was a discussion of that part of the foreign policy of the Government without the Government under



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me always stating, openly and unreservedly, its determination faithfully to carry out the treaties which bore the signature of Greece, the signature of the King, the signature of the responsible Government. (Prolonged applause.) And I found myself compelled, while discussing with those that had an opposite opinion and in defense of my opinion and of my firm determination that Greece shall not become forgetful of her obligations, I found myself compelled to remark that if great and powerful States can afford to overlook treaty obligations, according to circumstances, the danger arising therefrom is small for them. There is a great power there which perhaps makes up for the lack of moral force, but for small States, like Greece, I told my interlocutor, the violation of treaty obligations would constitute for the State a disgrace, which Greece, judging from her whole history, did not deserve, a disgrace which would render this State unable in the future to carry out its historical mission. (Great applause.)

If, gentlemen, we were sufficiently strong to shape independently our policy for the realization of our national claims, I would consent to enter into serious discussion with the man who would tell me that force is above right and that interest is above obligations. But when this State is still small, it happens that the carrying out of the moral mandates is perfectly in ac-



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cordance with the material interests, with the political interests, of the State and is inseparable therefrom.

### **Greece Has Anticipated Bulgaria's Intentions.**

But, gentlemen, you will allow me to be convinced that it was the strong and steady and unaltered attitude of the Greek Government in this matter that contributed to restrain, until this last period, Bulgaria's intentions to attack Serbia, for the temptation for her was really great, at the moment when Serbia was being attacked from the north by a great empire. Naturally, it was a great temptation for Bulgaria to attack the enemy whom she saw preoccupied elsewhere. Against this attack I do not say that the only restraining force was the steady attitude of the Greek Government, but I do claim with reason that it has been one of the principal causes for the non-action of Bulgaria against Serbia.

Furthermore, I am sure that lately, if a misunderstanding had not prevailed in Bulgaria about our policy, due perhaps to the fact that during the last days of the Government under the Honorable Deputy from Patras the opinions of the Government on this matter had suffered a certain shake, if, I say, an erroneous conception had not prevailed in Bulgaria as to the intentions

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of Greece in this matter, I have every reason to believe that Bulgaria would not have decided to mobilize and thus to bring about the danger of conflagration in the whole Balkan Peninsula.

GOUNARIS: "In the first place, what is the shake that you mentioned, and, in the second place, in what manner did it react on the Bulgarian Government?"

VENIZELOS: "The shake was produced by the statements made by Radoslavow to his friends and published in a communiqué to the press of Bulgaria, where there is a preventive censorship, and according to which Bulgaria, while mobilizing her army, was not worried, because she was counting on the neutrality of both Roumania and Greece."

GOUNARIS: "You were in the Government."

VENIZELOS: "Yes, but the present Government did not have any more occasion then to think of these matters and to make statements, because the Bulgarian mobilization came really quite unexpectedly."

GOUNARIS: "Are you assured in any way that the Greek Government under me proceeded to make some declaration to Bulgaria which would have justified Radoslavow's statements?"

VENIZELOS: "Not to Bulgaria. I said that during the last days of the late Government there came a change in opinions on this matter. You know, for you have experience, how difficult it is,

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especially in Greece, for the actions and even the intentions of the members of the Government to remain secret."

GOUNARIS: "Please specify the facts by which the change has been shown."

VENIZELOS: "Do you assure me that there was no change of opinions?"

GOUNARIS: "I assure nothing. I am going to speak, and then I will state what I assure. I ask of you to state the facts which you plead, so that I may know about which facts you speak and may oppose all that I have to and shall oppose. Whatever I have to say I will say. I ask of you to explain that which you seem to say."

VENIZELOS: "I do not wish this incident to go any further. I come to the conclusion by this statement: If the Honorable Deputy from Patras will assure me that he never, during his tenure of office, changed his intentions nor proceeded to any action showing such disposition, I retract what I said, and I am happy in accepting such an assurance."

GOUNARIS: "Please."

VENIZELOS: "You don't make the statement? Then it is useless for me to explain to Parliament by what action that change of your opinions has been manifested."

GOUNARIS: "You retract what you said about me. That's enough. What I have done in con-

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nection with what you said you will hear when I speak."

VENIZELOS: "Allow me to tell you, for we are before a political body, that the retraction has been made under certain condition. Therefore, if you state that you did not change your opinion, neither did you proceed to actions showing your change of opinion, I retract what I said and even beg your pardon."

GOUNARIS: "But if I don't make the statement, don't you retract?"

VENIZELOS: "But it is useless to explain to Parliament by which fact your action has been shown." (Applause.)

### **The Equilibrium in the Balkans.**

"But, gentlemen, to come again to our obligations arising from the Treaty of Alliance with the friendly and neighboring and allied State, there is not only the moral aspect of the question to be considered; there is not only the aspect of the political interest connected with it, in a general sense. But I ask you, gentlemen, even in case there were not a treaty of alliance with Serbia, don't you think that at least the Greek Government would have found itself in the greatest embarrassment about what it ought to do in a similar contingency? Don't you think, I say, that even if the scales did not go towards the

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assistance of Serbia, the Government would have found itself at least in the greatest embarrassment in considering that if it left one of the Balkan States to overthrow by its own force the equality of power established at Bucharest, it would have countersigned its own death warrant, to be executed within a short time?

And don't you think, gentlemen, if at the outbreak of this recent Balkan crisis, which began since the Bulgarian mobilization, another Government had been in power here with other opinions about our treaty obligations, and it had stated that it considered that treaty ineffective hereafter, and that therefore it did not care about the impending attack of Serbia by Bulgaria, don't you think, I say, that because of such an action by such a Government the greatest of dangers would have hung over the Greek Nation?

Don't you think that if such were the policy of the Government, it was only natural that Serbia, being adandoned by her ally and seeing from no quarter any hope of salvation, might have decided on concessions, not merely to the extent to which she had previously consented, but to a much greater extent, in order to gratify her neighbor's claims, to settle her differences with that neighbor and to leave him free thereafter, undistracted by Serbia, to attack Greece, who would have had already to her discredit the



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fact that she had violated her duty of alliance towards a State that was in a terrible condition, and who would be then without friends and undefended from all points?

It's an easy matter, gentlemen, to oppose negatively and to blame those who have the responsibility of the Government in circumstances that are so terrible and so serious for the Nation. But a statesman must possess the gift to see much sooner than others, for if he doesn't possess that gift, it is impossible that he shouldn't lead his country to disaster and ruin. (Great applause.)

But, gentlemen, you will allow me to bring forward, in defense of my opinions, another argument more decisive than all those that I have brought forward up to this time and which you will permit me to consider as quite strong. I have another argument against which no one of you has a right to object. I have the argument that on this point the present Government is in accordance with the expressed opinion of the Greek people. (Applause.)

Gentlemen, at the elections which the Government of the Honorable Representative from Patras conducted at the end of May it has been sought, by all possible means, to confuse the minds of the voters by the interposition, instead of the questions really separating us, of other questions which could not have been the subject of a constitutional struggle. And if, as I have

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always recognized, the popular verdict constituted neither an expression of opinion in favor of our mixing into the Dardenelles enterprise nor an expression of opinion about concessions which, after having thought to suggest them to the King, I had succeeded in burying, if, I say, the people did not express an opinion about either point, they did, nevertheless, express without hesitation an opinion on the policy of the previous Government, they did, that is to say, express the opinion that the policy laid out by me, together with its general direction and with the faithful observance of the obligations of alliance, was approved by the Greek people.

### **The Mercenary Press.**

This argument, gentlemen, is such that no one here who has self respect is permitted to contradict it.

The Honorable Deputy from Corfu addressed his question to me, because he wanted to know whether the mobilization was leading Greece to a speedy war or to repelling an enemy invasion. Gentlemen, it is not my policy that is leading the country to war. As I said a little while ago, I am confident that if the same conception without interruption had prevailed in the mind of the Greek Government that it was impossible for Greece to remain indifferent in case of an attack

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by Bulgaria against Serbia, I am confident that the Bulgarian mobilization, I have every reason to consider as most probable, that the Bulgarian mobilization would not have been ordered. You see, therefore, that you don't push the country to war by a firm policy, but you can push it much sooner to war by an unsteady policy, by a policy, I don't say it to offend you, which is not manly. As I said when I made the statements announcing the mobilization to Parliament, the mobilization is an extreme remedy. Fortunately all those in this hall who have a right to speak with authority recognized the necessity in which Greece found herself to mobilize, and only those questioned the usefulness of the mobilization who are out of this hall, I will say it clearly,—I address myself to the Press—those that are mercenary. (Great applause from the floor and the galleries.) I say the word with all consciousness of the gravity which the official character of my position gives to it, for, gentlemen, we are witnessing a most sickening spectacle of men who are handling certain organs of the public opinion and who to the knowledge of the whole world have sold their pen to a foreign propaganda and who come, at the moment when Greece is mobilizing to meet the greatest of dangers (applause), who come at the moment when in this hall a complete accordance has been obtained among all the political factors of the country, on this par-

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ticular question at least, who come to disturb the Greek soul, to place in dispute the question whether the Greek mobilization was necessary.

They do come, gentlemen, these men, at the moment when the State through its responsible representatives finds itself in the necessity of stopping the social and economic life of the Country in order to call upon the people to face again the serious circumstances which are threatening our Fatherland, and at this moment, when all those in this hall who can have a valid opinion are of one accord on this point at least, these men do come and through their mercenary pen try to sow doubt in the national soul, in the people under arms, who have been torn away from the bosoms of their wives or the caresses of their mothers and children in order to take up arms again, they come, I say, to shake the people's soul and to create doubt whether these sacrifices are necessary or useless. (Applause.)

The Honorable Deputy from Corfu asked me: "In carrying out this policy of yours, what are you going to do, if while going to the assistance of your allies, the Serbians, you meet other bayonets which you do not wish to meet?" I will confine myself, Mr. Deputy, to expressing my deepest regret that on the way to carry out my duty and to protect the most valuable interests of the Nation I am about to face other peoples with whom



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I have no immediate quarrel and the clash with whom unfortunately cannot but be full of dangers. (Interruptions and noise.)

### **The Landing of the Allies at Salonica.**

Gentlemen, don't get excited, because of this interruption. The opposition to the policy of the Government was equally strong when the power mentioned by those who interrupted me now, was in the opposite camp. Therefore don't get excited. And I also remind the Honorable Deputy from Corfu that Italy, although she declared war against Austria and has been conducting it for the last four months, did not become a belligerent as regards Germany, neither do I propose to you, of course, that we declare war against Germany and Austria. But if, gentlemen, while carrying out our national policy, if by carrying out our duty, imposed upon us by honor and treaty obligations, and if while defending the most vital interests of our country, we were to face those powerful nations, I am sure that while expressing our regrets therefor, we would do our duty. (Applause.)

I do not wish that there should be a misunderstanding, gentlemen, as to this expression of mine; and I am compelled to state to you that when, during these last days, the announcement was made of a dispatch of Anglo-French troops



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to Salonica and the Greek Government was protesting against the violation of neutrality, as I said a little while ago, it could not remain indifferent to those dangers which, without regard to the violation of neutrality, could be connected with the landing and passage through our territory of the international troops, for the opinion had been expressed in Greece that it was possible that the occupation of Serbian territories and the passage through Greek territory might be used as a means of pressure on the part of the allied States to obtain concessions in favor of Bulgaria. And I found myself compelled to state to those Powers, towards which the gratitude of the Greek people is very great, I was compelled to state that if I didn't think it was incumbent upon us to oppose by force the passage of troops through our territory and the violation of our neutrality, owing to present conditions arising from the world-wide war and the general upheaval, I was determined, nevertheless, to oppose the small force of Greece against the colossus of the two Great Powers in order to resist the landing of troops which might possibly have designs upon Greek interests! (Applause.)

Gentlemen, as I said in the beginning, I repeat now, that seldom or perhaps never has a more serious discussion than the present been conducted in the Greek Parliament regarding the future of the nation. If the Bulgarian mobiliza-

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tion is to be followed by the entrance of Bulgaria into the war through an attack against Serbia and we do not do our share, whatever is in our power, to repel this danger, we run the risk of seeing the equilibrium and the equality of power which we established by the Treaty of Bucharest upset in such a manner, by the simultaneous diminution and destruction of the power of one of the allied States and by the corresponding increase of power of the other State—which, unfortunately, as I told Parliament three days ago, does not cease to declare that it does not consider itself bound to respect the Treaty of Bucharest, and which also, unfortunately, does not cease to state that it considers all Greek Macedonia, all the country to the bank of the Haliacmon as territory included in the circle of its national claims—we run the risk, gentlemen, of seeing the great Greek achievement which was accomplished by the wars of 1912 and 1913 becoming of a very short duration.

But I, gentlemen, retain in this instance, too, all the optimism for which I have been frequently blamed. I realize all the seriousness of the circumstances. Nobody else could wish more than I do that European peace had not been disturbed for a great number of years after the Treaty of Bucharest. I am sure that a long period of peace would have given Greece the means of developing her new, doubled State, to render it wealthy,

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both from a financial and a military point of view, if I am allowed to connect wealth with military expenditures, to render Greece, let me better say, strong from a financial, military and political point of view, so that she might look at the future without anxiety. But, unfortunately, in this world we do not play the role of a great State. Even great States, by themselves, have not been able to shape the course of history according to their own views and interests. The war broke out certainly without any cause on our part. But once we found ourselves face to face with the great problems raised by this war, I am sure, gentlemen, that if we have again the country and this wonderful people united for the defense of our national interests, we shall succeed again in effectively defending ourselves, we shall succeed again in repelling the great dangers that are menacing the integrity of the Country. And who knows, gentlemen, if we may not succeed in really securing that future which we could with less pain and danger, secure through a long period of peace, if it were not for the interposition of the European War?

Gentlemen, I shall be happy to hear on the part of the eminent orators of this Parliament, on the part of those who can with greater authority handle these great foreign and national questions, I should be happy if I could hear a refutation of all that I said; if they brought all the

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opposing arguments, so that we might carry on this discussion in this chamber with all due calmness, having in view, I repeat, the critical circumstances and deeming it our duty to enlighten the Greek people who are under arms. And certainly the heaviest responsibility would fall upon the man who would not recognize his possible error. But against the arguments which I bring before you, against the conviction with which I come before the Greek people again at this time and ask for their confidence, in order that they may follow me in the road which I show them, against those arguments and against that conviction, nothing else has been brought forward but a negative policy, only hesitations and doubts.

Permit me to say that a negative policy, hesitations and doubts, are nothing else but a reflective return to the old ideology, to that ideology according to which we considered this State as not only temporarily but permanently crippled, as incapable of brave deeds, as destined merely to vegetate and barely live out of international beggary. And it would be manifest, in the face of the evident danger which comes from the north, in order to take away all that we gained during the two wars, that I should be irresolute and timid if I did not rush to decisions which are imposed upon the Nation by duty, honor and supreme interest. (Great applause.)

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### **SECOND SPEECH**

**Delivered September 21, 1915**

#### **The Position of Greece Between the Two European Combinations.**

It is to be wondered why the Honorable Deputy from Corfu considered that in my speech I touched him personally or other leaders of the Opposition. There never was in me such an intention, nor has a manifestation of such an intention been made. But the Honorable Deputy from Corfu took the floor and attempted to represent me as not having tried to convince Parliament by the presentation of valid arguments, but as having tried to carry it away, through an appeal to the heart. He will allow me, however, to point out to him that he was the very one who to my whole long array of arguments opposed no argument at all, which is shown by the fact that he did not even mention the main basis of the present discussion, that is, our treaty obligation towards Serbia. And he likewise opposed nothing in regard to the danger, which I myself see, if Bulgaria should be permitted to attack Serbia in order to destroy her and to occupy as much of Serbian territory as she should like. He confined himself again to—let me call it—his



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affection of long standing in certain foreign directions. The Honorable Deputy from Corfu, instead of discussing objectively the facts, the way they present themselves, and instead of trying to refute the arguments brought by me before the Parliament, told you this: "Don't you see that if you follow this policy you bring yourselves inevitably towards a combination of Powers where all your enemies are to be found and that you move away from that combination where all your friends are to be found?"

THEOTOKIS: "I didn't say that."

VENIZELOS: "You at least said this: 'Don't you see that you go towards the combination where all your enemies are to be found, while in the other combination the parties are at least indifferent?' On this secondary matter, which does not affect the substance of the discussion that is occupying us this evening, I ought to say a few words, not in order to convince you that you ought not to form your opinions and decisions on the strength of sympathies and antipathies, but because I have a duty not to allow it to be believed that, at least with reference to the more general policy of the great European Powers, there were indications or counter-indications as to our policy, in accordance with the conception of the Deputy from Corfu. The Deputy from Corfu reminds us of Russia and of the Slavic danger. I think, gentlemen, that when

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we say Slavic danger, we mean South Slavic danger, that we mean principally the Slavic races in the Balkans. We think, therefore, that when we say Slavic danger, after the new arrangement of things by the treaty of Bucharest, we mean especially the Bulgarian danger. Let us, therefore, stop talking of the Slavic danger as of a Russian danger, the way the Deputy from Corfu wishes to present it, and let us not shift our view from that point where the danger really lies. The Deputy from Corfu recalled also a Mediterranean Power which has world-wide or imperialistic views, as they are generally called. But he will allow me to remind him that while that Power was in an alliance, existing for many decades and regularly renewed, the Deputy from Corfu had his policy shaped at that time towards the same direction and no danger from that direction was worrying him then.

“As regards the English sympathy, of long standing and almost incurable, for Bulgaria, you will permit me to remark that it is due, in the greatest measure, to our own fault, because since the Russo-Turkish War we allowed, by our own policy, the opinion to be formed in Europe that Bulgaria was a State capable of living and developing and able to be made use of for the policy of those who have great interests in the Orient, and that Greece belonged to the so-called decaying or almost dying nations. But when we

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showed that we, too, were able to perform brave and great things, not for a moment did support and assistance fail us from that side. And the solution of the particular question of my country, which by all those holding a contrary opinion was considered as insoluble, on account of the alleged ulterior motives of England, is due to that Power, and also the solution of the question of the Islands is primarily due to that Power.

“But, gentlemen, since I tried to clear these Powers of a part of the stain of anti-hellenism thrown upon them by the Deputy from Corfu, allow me to tell you that on the other side, if I see Germany and Austria, two States leading in civilization, I have seen also, for a long time past, and I do see even today, Turkey, with which it is true that our relations to-day are considered to be normal, but to which, unfortunately, our interests, not on account of their nature, but as a result of the steady policy of the statesmen of Turkey, are in an irreconcilable opposition. And when I see that to that combination, which is triple, there is danger of a fourth one being added, to make it quadruple, then the Deputy from Corfu will allow me to tell him that I cannot, if I am not influenced by prejudice, but perceive dangers there where I see these two States and lesser dangers where I see England and Italy. But, gentlemen, I do

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not bring forward this question in order to draw an argument in favor of my opinions, by invoking the general distribution of European Powers. It must be considered that the Great Powers are each seeking their own interests. I only think that in regard to the Oriental questions, in which our own interests are included, the two Western Powers are those whose interests are more identical with our own. The new Hellenic conception fully understands that we cannot expect foreigners to be friends of Greece. What we must do is to succeed ourselves in finding our co-workers and companions in arms, each time within the circle in which there is a better adjustment of our own interests. This we must look for, Mr. Deputy from Corfu, and I may be allowed to repeat that your speech did not touch any of the main arguments that I brought forward, but it only tried to shift the discussion to a different ground." (Applause.)

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## **THIRD SPEECH**

**Delivered September 21, 1915**

### **The Question of Concessions.**

“The Honorable Deputy from Patras dealt extensively with the statement, incidentally made by me, that if concessions were asked of Greece, everybody else may be responsible for this except the Government over which I was presiding when I retired from power in the month of February of the present year. The Deputy from Patras thought that he could from this tribune represent the facts otherwise, in order to state that it was not the first time under his Government that concessions were asked of Greece in favor of Bulgaria, but that similar concessions were being asked, too, while I was in power. He alluded to opinions expressed since the beginning of the European War about such concessions as would have to be made to Bulgaria, opinions which did not constitute an official demarche towards the Greek Government, but which nevertheless manifested the existence of dispositions in circles having influence with the governments of the then Triple Entente, such opinions, I say, could be mentioned from this



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tribune for no other reason than to demonstrate how successful and how effective had been the policy of the government which the Deputy from Patras succeeded, in that since the month of October it had received an official assurance that no concessions would be asked of Greece, and in January, when promises of very large concessions in Asia Minor had been made to us and when it would have been opportune for the Powers promising the concessions to ask for counter-concessions on the part of Greece, nothing else had been asked of Greece except to withdraw the objections, which she had expressed from the beginning, against concessions which might be made on the part of Serbia.

“The Honorable Deputy from Patras, in order to refute this official proof that no counter-concessions were asked of us even in the case of very large concessions to us, and to prove that the danger of such concessions being asked of us was always present, mentioned my second memorandum, made three or four days after that communication, the occasion for the publication of this memorandum by the press being so well known by Parliament that I need not explain it. But the Deputy from Patras by bringing forward such an argument is evidently trying to alter the facts. For the plan which I outlined in my second memorandum was not based on any concessions being asked of us in

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favor of Bulgaria, but it had as a basis the opinion that if in no other way was it possible to obtain those great objects of which I was thinking and which I was after, it might be advisable for the State to accept even painful sacrifices.

"When I resigned office in February I left you these things: An assurance, since the month of October, that no concessions would be demanded; a request from the Powers, at the moment when promises of concessions in Asia Minor were made, that we withdraw our objections to concessions on the part of Serbia.

"How it happened that concessions should be asked of us after a short time, I certainly do not know. You asked whether that was due to your having taken an attitude that was hostile to the Powers of the Entente. It would be sufficient for me to believe that your awkwardness brought about this result."

GOUNARIS: "Prove the awkwardness."

VENIZELOS: "By witnesses or by documents? We are a political body. How do you want me to prove it? By what other manner than by stating the facts, as they took place?"

GOUNARIS: "I proved to you that they also asked for concessions from Serbia."

VENIZELOS: "They asked of Serbia, but they did not ask from Greece, and you must not forget that the Powers of the Triple Entente had

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other rights towards Serbia which they were lacking towards Greece; for Serbia, having sustained the attack of the Austrians, obtained at the same time the entrance of three Great Powers into the war for the defense of the territorial integrity and independence of Serbia.

“I am absolutely convinced that Russia, at that time, had no reason whatever or interest to start the world-wide war. Neither had any of the allies of Russia any interest to start the war, for which the facts proved that Russia was not sufficiently prepared. The war was started because the independence of Serbia was threatened, and Russia, as the defender of the Slavic States, thought that she ought not to suffer the humiliation which she would have suffered if Serbia were destroyed and her sovereignty curtailed. And if I have mentioned what had happened after my return to power, I have done so in order to say that since I again took hold of the Government, no demarche has been made to me about concessions.”

### **The Meaning of the Greco-Serbian Treaty of Alliance.**

“But all these things now belong to history. We shall have time, or rather other people will have time, for I don’t believe we shall have time to occupy ourselves with them, to write history

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and to judge the facts. Let us come to those subjects which interest us not as historical matter, but as a present and pressing necessity, to face a circumstance which is one of the most difficult that our race was ever confronted with. The Honorable Deputy from Patras told you that I invoked the treaty in order to bring before Parliament a matter of interpretation; but so long as I don't bring to Parliament the text of the treaty the Parliament is not in a position to interpret it. But I explained to Parliament, gentlemen, what the essential terms of this treaty with Serbia are which can occupy our attention this evening. The Honorable Deputy from Patras did not dispute the exactness of the statement of the terms of the Greco-Serbian Treaty and the obligations arising therefrom. But he told you that there has been at four different times talk of the application of this treaty, during the period after the termination of the war with Bulgaria, and that at all those four times the treaty was not applied; therefore, a treaty the application of which was attempted four times and which was impossible of application, was considered by the Honorable Deputy from Patras as having ceased to be valid and alive."

GOUNARIS: "I didn't say such a thing."

VENIZELOS: "Such a thing I gathered."

GOUNARIS: "I said that the application of the treaty depended upon the general appreciation

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of circumstances. Please refute what I said and not what you make of it, for that would be a very easy matter."

VENIZELOS: "The non-application of the treaty at the first time does not shake its validity at all, for if the treaty was not applied, it was not applied because we did not go to war with Turkey, so that it might be seen whether Serbia would carry out the obligations of alliance; but she proved by her action that she was ready to carry out the obligations of alliance, without even pretending that in the war with Turkey we were formally represented as being the aggressors and not the defenders. On the other occasions the Honorable Deputy from Patras had no right to assert that the treaty was not carried out. It was always carried out, but according to the conception of the Government as to the way this treaty could be really carried out in the common interest of the two contracting parties.

"But the Honorable Deputy from Patras asserted another thing, too. He asserted that the request on the part of Serbia for our consent to concessions, intended to be made by Serbia, meant the abrogation of the treaty."

GOUNARIS: "I didn't say such a thing. I said that the request of Serbia, the way it was formulated and having as an object the recognition on our part of Serbia as being free to contract



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and co-operate with Bulgaria, constituted a request of abrogation, but I assumed the existence of a conception that the interpretation of the treaty depended upon the general condition of circumstances which would impose upon us the necessity of taking this or that action."

VENIZELOS: "I accept, then, what is being said at this moment. The Honorable Deputy from Patras considers that the request of Serbia, which was addressed to us, that we might consent to the concession demanded of her in favor of Bulgaria, constituted a request for the abrogation of the treaty of alliance."

GOUNARIS: "In which she was justified by the circumstances, too."

VENIZELOS: "Does this request constitute a request for abrogation or exactly the opposite? A request for abrogation or a request for continuation, because an action was asked for on the part of Serbia which clearly, if made by her without our consent, was contrary to the continuation of the treaty? No request for abrogation, therefore, but a request for the continuation of the treaty does the request of Serbia constitute, that we consent to an action which, if done without our consent, would have given us obviously then the right to denounce that treaty.

"The Honorable Deputy from Patras asserted that the European War influenced materially

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the existing situation, and he furthermore added that, whenever the attack of Serbia by Bulgaria takes place, we shall be able safely to judge whether there is an occasion for an intervention on our part on account of the treaty of alliance. That the European War influenced matters in the whole of Europe and in the whole world, there was no necessity for us to hear this evening from this tribune. But I ask: In what sense did the European War influence the validity of the treaty with Serbia, the defensive treaty which by its terms anticipated this war?

“You said that the European War changed the existing situation, and you said it in order to assert that the treaty can be considered by us as being in force no more, owing to the influence of the European War. But I was more astonished by the opinion expressed here and according to which even now, when Bulgaria is mobilizing and we are compelled to proceed to a general mobilization, in order to meet the Bulgarian mobilization, our policy must not and cannot yet be clearly shaped, but must remain in doubt, that it may be definitely shaped at the moment when an attack may occur of Serbia by Bulgaria. Allow me to say that this theory is a continuation of the conceptions prevailing for a considerable time during the tenure of the office of Prime Minister by the Deputy from Patras, and it constitutes a policy which I have

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already characterized as negative, and of which, allow me to say, the whole wisdom consists in this: 'Let us not move; we are neutrals.' "

GOUNARIS: "Is that a little thing?"

VENIZELOS: "Regardless of the fact that those who could see further were realizing that it was impossible for the European War to end without our being compelled to move too."

GOUNARIS: "The later the better."

### **The Object of the Greek Mobilization.**

VENIZELOS: "But, Mr. Deputy, you cannot say this to the Greek people from the moment they were called to a general mobilization. I don't think you can say to the Greek people for a long time: 'Wait under arms, so that we may see when the proper moment shall come for us to decide.' And when I reminded you before what painful consequences and what tragic awakenings you would have had if by chance you had the honor to be in the Government from the first moment of the Bulgarian mobilization—when our opinion was again asked about the carrying out of the obligations of alliance—you have shown yourself reserved or refusing, and you have caused, perhaps, more concessions to be made by Serbia to Bulgaria, so that the former might escape the danger hanging over her, and later on you were compelled to face alone the

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whole of Bulgaria in order to protect your own interests, the Deputy from Patras blamed me because I accepted the overthrowing of the equilibrium by consenting to the concessions on the part of Serbia."

GOUNARIS: "I did not blame you. I said that I invoked the fact as an argument."

VENIZELOS: "Very well. I am very glad that you did not blame me, for blame was impossible, because the equilibrium would not have been affected; for it is known that the withdrawal of objections against concessions on the part of Serbia was asked of us in the month of January, in exchange for other very vast concessions to us in Asia Minor, which were not simply intended to restore the equilibrium, but to create a dominating position for Greece. But fortunately I do not need to deal with this subject, for it seems that I misunderstood the leader of the Opposition. But one thing I should like to ask from the Deputy from Patras: how does he explain the fact that, when he took over the Government of the country, in the ministerial declaration which he published by a communiqué of the Department of Foreign Affairs, he considered it his duty to emphasize in such a manner the observance of the obligations of alliance with Serbia as to write: 'But at the same time a supreme duty imposes upon the country the reservation that she will fulfill the obligations

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of alliance that have been undertaken?" "

GOUNARIS: "I say that even now."

VENIZELOS: "If you say that at this hour, too, if you believe that the supreme duty of the country imposes upon us the duty of fulfilling the obligations undertaken by the treaty of alliance, I will declare that I will speak no longer on this subject."

### **Mr. Gounaris Ignorant of the Obligations Arising From the Treaty.**

GOUNARIS: "You say that you will speak no longer, because you believe in the confusion for which I blamed you. That Greece will fulfill the obligations which she undertook, nobody doubts. The question is whether there are any obligations and what they are."

VENIZELOS: "The Deputy from Patras, being an extreme theorist, when he was called to power and being about to state to the people under what political programme he was assuming it, thought it was necessary, it seems, without knowing whether Greece had obligations from an alliance or not, to say in his ministerial declaration, and with such an emphasis, too, that it was a supreme duty for us to carry out our obligations arising from the alliance. It was not permissible for an earnest man when assuming



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power at the time, neither is it permissible to-day for a man of Mr. Gounaris' position, to say that the principal part of his programme is to consider as his supreme duty the carrying out of the obligations of alliance without his knowing whether such obligations exist. And how can you to-day violate obligations which not only existed then in the treaty, but which have been renewed by my declarations at the beginning of the war and by your statements, and how do you come to-day to convince Parliament that it is not certain in the case of Serbia's being attacked by Bulgaria that the treaty stipulation would hold and that we should be under obligation to resist the attempt to overthrow the *statu quo* created by the treaty of Bucharest? The Honorable Deputy from Patras, in defending the policy of neutrality, said that certainly when everybody is fighting, the natural condition is neutrality. Certainly, when everybody is fighting, the natural condition of those that are not fighting is neutrality, but there are exceptions to the rule, when put in such a general way. The first exception is when at least one of the belligerents is an ally whom you undertook, in anticipation of such dangers, to help in the same way as he undertook a corresponding obligation towards you; and there is another circumstance in which the maintenance of neutrality, when others are fighting, is not a natural condition. It is that in which

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the struggle is waged in countries upon which your national claims are extended.

"The leader of the Opposition approved of this from the first moment and I thank him for it, because he had the political courage to approve of it, despite the opinion of many men around him."

GOUNARIS: "Nobody of those around me had a contrary opinion, and all that has been said in the press about it was absolutely false."

VENIZELOS: "Perhaps. But at least those of the press whom you defended a little while ago and to whom I will come back myself towards the end of my speech, the way you have done, had a contrary opinion."

GOUNARIS: "I do not think I have a right to blame them as being mercenary, because they have a contrary opinion."

VENIZELOS: "I take it for granted that the honorable leader of the Opposition approved of the mobilization as a means dictated by necessity, as a means of precaution against the general mobilization of Bulgaria. But the Honorable Deputy from Patras, while approving of the general mobilization, seems—and I say seems because I admit that he leaves also some ways open to another solution—seems to be inclined to the idea that if Bulgaria, instead of turning directly against us, should prefer rather to turn against Serbia in order to crush her first and

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then to turn against us, we must sit with folded arms under a general mobilization for many months, until Bulgaria's war is at an end. This, gentlemen, means a deep, a radical disregard of what a general mobilization means for a State. Perhaps, because Greece has made many mobilizations in the past which were called mobilizations without their really being such, when one and one-half class of reserves were called to the colors and then, after a month, two more classes, and again another class—for these reasons, perhaps, the impression remained that mobilization is something, which, from the very nature of its application, is of long duration, a thing that requires six, seven or eight months to develop. But the conception of to-day, which really Germany was the first to teach to the military world, is that a general mobilization of a country is to be ordered only either when the country is prepared to attack, immediately after the mobilization and concentration, or until the time of obtaining the removal of the causes which brought about the mobilization. For one does not fight for the sake of fighting, but for the purpose of imposing one's will, for the purpose of defending one's rights, and one mobilizes because one's vital interests are at stake, for the purpose of attacking immediately after the concentration, or for demobilizing then, because, in the meantime, one succeeded in obtaining the thing for

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which one mobilized. But you, while approving of the mobilization, how do you consider it? Do you consider it as a permanent condition which can last for months, so that not only will the country be ruined financially, but the army morally, by being mobilized without doing anything and only sitting down and looking? Do you conceive of the mobilization that way?"

GOUNARIS: "When is the war going to end?"

VENIZELOS: "I don't know when the war is going to end. The question that I must decide is whether there is a cause for war, whether the vital interests of the country are at stake, so that not only her moral obligations, those arising from the treaty of alliance, but even the national interests impose upon me the duty of facing this national difficulty. One knows when the struggle begins, but one does not know when it ends. You have no right, therefore, to reverse my question in order to learn from me when the war will end. But I have the right to ask you how you conceive of this general mobilization of which you approve, if you mean that it should continue until Bulgaria shall have demobilized after finishing the possible war with Serbia. For we really talk always of a war between Bulgaria and Serbia, although the Prime Minister of Bulgaria assured us that he has no intention whatever of attacking Serbia. We speak of these suppositions because they are prob-



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able, because they are possible, but perhaps they may not rest on facts."

GOUNARIS: "If she will not attack, shall you remain mobilized?"

VENIZELOS: "If she will not attack, but demobilizes, you may rest assured that I will also demobilize."

GOUNARIS: "If she will not demobilize?"

VENIZELOS: "The Honorable Deputy from Patras will allow me to remark that it is very possible, without being probable, that Bulgaria may do something else, in which case, of course, there would be no occasion for our intervention; and I believe Bulgaria has other frontiers, too, and if she turned against them, our treaty obligations at least would not hold, neither, perhaps, would our vital interests be affected.

"Gentlemen, I would consider as consistent that statesman, but happily I do not find him in this chamber, who would say: 'Why do you want the mobilization? Bulgaria, in mobilizing, states to us that she has no hostile intentions at all, she declares to us that she defers to a more convenient time the settlement of her accounts with us, and she prefers not to have to face two enemies at the same time, but to strike them one at a time. Why, then, should you mobilize now and not wait until she may advise you when she intends to attack you, so that you may then make your



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mobilization and not begin to exhaust yourselves now?" That statesman I should consider as consistent.

### **Dangers That Would Be Created by a Bulgarian Attack.**

"Gentlemen, we are obliged to face the facts in a manly way. The Treaty of Bucharest has been called by me the constitution of the Balkan Peninsula. Unfortunately, the European War, which came so soon, before Greece had the time to organize her new possessions, creates dangers, grave dangers, for the maintenance of the Treaty of Bucharest, or, to speak in a more general way, the maintenance of the equilibrium of power which was consecrated by that treaty. As I said in my statement, when announcing the mobilization to the National Representation, unfortunately one of the States which signed the treaty, being used for many decades to believing that it was on the point of realizing its national aspirations at the expense of all the other Balkan States, a State that was used to believing this, owing to the temporary weakness of the other States, considers that it is impossible for it to submit to the Treaty of Bucharest and to respect it. Moreover, this State did not fail, even at the signing of the treaty, to bring forward these protestations. And I ask, what

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responsible statesman would come to say from this tribune that in case Bulgaria attacks Serbia and he contributes to the destruction of Serbia and therefore succeeds in having Bulgaria grow out of proportion at the expense of Serbia, what responsible statesman can tell the Greek people that he can sleep peacefully, because Bulgaria either directly or through somebody else assures us that she has no hostile intentions against us to-day? Which is that statesman who will say from this tribune that he takes, before the people and before the generations to come, the responsibility for the calamities which would come if we placed confidence in these assurances to-day, and if we were unmoved and allowed the complete destruction of the allied State, with a corresponding growth of the power of that very State which, unfortunately, appears as our implacable enemy?

“Of course, it is possible that even if Bulgaria does not attack Serbia, it is possible, through the outcome of the European War, that Serbia may suffer a curtailment in the sovereignty of her country and it is possible that an increase in Bulgarian power may result therefrom; but you are bound to admit that if the matter were limited to that only, if the Austro-German armies should only force the passage of Orsova and thence through Bulgaria they should march to Constantinople, while Bulgaria kept quiet, our

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dangers would be less. If matters were to be decided in the Congress of Peace, without Bulgaria's being in the meantime in possession of the greater part of Serbia, it would be possible to hope that views again would prevail about the necessity of an equilibrium of power among the Balkan States. But if instead of that, if instead of all of us, Bulgaria and ourselves, going under the same conditions into the Congress of Peace, we were left out of it, while Bulgaria participated in it as a belligerent, so as to have a voice and a vote, and not only that, but if she appeared before the Congress of Peace having in her possession perhaps a great part of Serbia, not only the undisputed but also the disputed zone and probably a part of the Serbian Kingdom, as it was before the war of 1912, do you believe that the loss which we shall suffer in this second contingency can approach the one we are going to suffer in the other contingency?

### **The Vote of the Greek People.**

"The Honorable leader of the Opposition spoke also of the vote of the Greek people, while answering my allegation that in favor of this policy of mine I have obtained the expressed opinion of the voters of the country, through the elections recently held. And the Deputy from Patras asked: 'Was it the fact that the elections were

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held on the controversy about the interpretation of the treaty?" The Deputy from Patras asserted, if I understood rightly, that the elections were conducted on the question which brought about my resignation from office. Imagine, gentlemen, in what error the Deputy from Patras still is, so many months after the elections are over. He thinks that the Liberal Party, when it went to the polls, did so in order to send an army division to the Dardenelles, and he forgets that all those who could then with authority represent the Liberal Party in explaining the opinions of that party were saying that there was no more question of that policy of the month of February. And if the Greek people have rendered a verdict about anything, despite all that has been done under your Government to adulterate the opinion of the voters——"

GOUNARIS: "I tell you that it has not been adulterated."

VENIZELOS: "Things have been done which for a great number of decades have not been done in the political life of Greece. When I shall speak of your defense of certain organs of public opinion I shall return to this point and I shall tell you whatever I have to tell you about it.

"The Honorable Deputy from Patras addressed to me the question: 'Through what procedure—I have it marked and underlined—did the Greek people express their opinion at the elections?'

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Through the constitutional procedure, I answer him. The Greek people decided, through the elections, that they again entrusted the Government of the country to the Liberal Party, that they entrusted the Government of the country to the Liberal Party with a full knowledge of its policy, because it had been explained to them.

“The Deputy from Patras, distorting entirely, rather misinterpreting entirely, adulterating entirely the opinion expressed by the Greek People, does not accept the fact that by this opinion the general policy of the Liberal Government had been approved, a policy which in foreign affairs had a definite direction, and had as a principal part of its programme the carrying out of the obligations of the treaty of alliance. He doesn't consider that the people decided upon that, but he thinks that they decided about the necessity of sending a division to the Dardanelles, and he almost denounced me to the Greek people on the ground that, having been called to power through the approval of my policy, I did not take care to send that division, not because conditions had changed in the meantime, but because I considered the sending of that division as unnecessary.

There is no question, gentlemen, to open an incidental discussion to-day about the part of my policy related to my resignation from office, which belongs now to history. Let us postpone



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a possible discussion of this matter to some other time, if that too must be conducted in this chamber. But I will maintain, Honorable Deputy from Patras, without in the least wishing to touch you personally, that in claiming that the public opinion has not been expressed through the elections upon the questions before us, but that it has been expressed through the Press which I alluded to, you insult the political system under which this country is governed. I was the first to recognize that the newspapers and consequently the journalists are in a measure interpreters of public opinion. But I did not expect that a statesman of your prominence should put face to face the expression made through the elections——”

GOUNARIS: “No.”

### **Making the Distinction Between the Mercenary and the Honest Press.**

VENIZELOS: “Read your speech and you will see it—‘For the expression of public opinion which is interpreted by the newspapers.’ And of which newspapers did I speak, gentlemen? The Honorable Deputy from Patras, asserting that I insulted the organs of public opinion—I read from the notes that I kept in order that I might not misinterpret him—the Deputy from Patras had an interest to extend that circle

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against which all that has been said this evening, from this tribune, was directed; he had an interest to extend that circle to the whole of the Press, but it referred only to certain organs of the Press and of the Public Opinion. There are men even in this chamber that publish a newspaper which for many years has been mercilessly attacking the Liberal Government; nevertheless nobody even thought of making against this organ of public opinion the slightest allusion similar to that which I so clearly expressed this evening; and towards other organs of public opinion, too, which follow definite principles and which have demonstrated a constancy in their policy, nobody thought of addressing an insult. But when, Honorable Deputy from Patras, it is known to all those living around here that certain organs of public opinion managed within less than twenty-four hours to change entirely their policy, because in the meantime there had been a shameless buying out on the part of a foreign propaganda, do you believe that you had a right to admonish me and to advise me not to attack the press, pretending that I was almost trying to terrorize it? You even told me that we, public men, must get used to suffer even insults and injustices on the part of the press. While I am not the oldest in this chamber, I have been the most insulted, because my political career has been longer and more eventful and it was only

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natural for me to become an object of ordinary attacks. I have never been depressed on account of such attacks, nor at this moment do you see me angry because personal attacks have been made against me.

“There has been no such personal attack, but, of course, my conscience is aroused when for so many months I have been witnessing, together with the Greek society, the most immoral spectacle of certain organs of public opinion, which in a moment entirely abandoned the policy which they have been defending for such a long time, because they were enlightened by the lavish dispensation of money, a dispensation made by a foreign propaganda of money which was not given to serve Greek interests, but to serve interests which were foreign and alien to the Greek interests! (Great applause.)

“The Honorable Deputy from Patras will allow me, furthermore, not to pass without protest an injustice which he has done to other organs of public opinion. In connection with what has been said here to-night, he mentioned the violent attacks which had been made during his tenure of office on the part of the opposition press, and especially on the part of the press which was friendly to the Liberal Party. But he has done the press an injustice when he spoke about it at the same hour and at the same moment, side by side, with the mercenary press, when he spoke

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of a press which in interpreting the opinions of a great political party has defended them with power and vigor, perhaps with harshness sometimes, for which the explanation, if not the justification, must be sought in this: that the press was representing not merely the opinion of a great political party in the country, but of the party holding the majority in the country; for you did not have yet the opinion of the nation expressed in your favor by a majority in Parliament, and the facts have proved by the elections that the fiction remained simply fiction, while the reality was in favor of the opinions of the press which represented the views of that political party.

"The Honorable Deputy from Patras thought that I had done something out of place when from this tribune I denounced to the Greek Nation, as I had a duty to, the mercenary press, and he pointed out to me that another way was indicated for me in which to strike at that press, and that was by bringing charges against it."

GOUNARIS: "No."

VENIZELOS: "You told me that, since they are traitors to the country, I ought to bring charges against them; and my opinion is that you have considered that as the crime of treason against the country and have asked for the application of the provisions of the law relative to such crime, to the end that the heads of these men

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should be cut off. But I think not only that those provisions cannot be carried out, but also that no other provision bearing upon this matter can be applied."

GOUNARIS: "I did not mean that you should apply the provisions of the law which are in force and which, it is true, are not applied owing to their severity; I meant that you should introduce a new provision, that you might take measures accordingly."

VENIZELOS: "I do not think you can blame me for not having taken measures in connection with this matter, when you know that it is only a month since I have been in power."

### **The Gounaris Cabinet Has Tried to Intimidate the Voters.**

"You accused me of wishing to terrorize the press, me who was President of the Government during the two previous wars, when the press was under martial law, and you will admit that never in any country has martial law been less onerous to the press than that which has been applied here. But even now, gentlemen, there is a decree of proclamation of martial law in Athens, signed, which of course was asked for by me and for which I am responsible; nevertheless I am trying and I am postponing from day to day its publication in the hope that it may be possible that it become unnecessary. And



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you come to accuse me of trying to terrorize the press, because, ascending this tribune and being a partisan of the liberty of the press and even tolerating its very license, on account of the difficulty of punishing the license without restricting the liberty, I do not reach such a point of political cowardice as not to strike at a mercenary press by saying to it: 'You are mercenary, because you receive foreign money and try to serve foreign interests?'

“But the Honorable Deputy from Patras has been more unlucky when he made use of the term of terrorism as being utilized by me for the purpose of muzzling the press that opposes me, and I am accused as a terrorist by whom? By the man who, having come to power in a way that was certainly constitutional, but not entirely normal; by a man who, furthermore, on being vested for the first time with the office of Prime Minister of the State, has considered that it was morally permissible and politically right and useful to try to use terrorism against a great political party which left power, not because it was deprived of the confidence of the country, but because it dissented from the Crown for reasons which were to its credit, which left power because it remembered what its leader had said on being first received by the People of Athens, that he would not consent to remain in power, even for a moment, if that was to be done at the

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sacrifice of his principles and of his opinions. And that political party you tried to terrorize the following day. After being in power over four and one-half years I left for Spetzae for a few days' rest, and when I returned, I was forbidden to land at Piraeus, as though I were a common criminal. (Voices: 'Shame, shame,' and applause.) I landed at Phaleron, because Piraeus was terrorized by infantry and cavalry. And he forgets that he accused me of wishing to terrorize the press, me who even at this moment am trying to postpone the application of the martial law. Who forgets that? The man who, as minister of war, on the anniversary of the National Holiday ordered that the house of the ex-prime minister should be surrounded, of the ex-prime minister who, after all, had himself somewhat contributed to the enthusiastic celebration of that holiday after the events of 1912 and 1913. The man who ordered that the house of the ex-prime minister should be besieged and that he himself, who before the siege had gone to Kephissia, should be prevented, on his return, from entering his house.

And it is the Deputy from Patras that accuses me of terrorism; he who consented to conduct elections during which the right of assembly had been entirely abrogated by a police regulation. Who consented to conduct elections in which he made it a rule that all those applauding the leader

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of one of the great political parties should be considered insulters of the Crown and taken to jail. Gentlemen, I regret if in the course of my speech I have been sometimes harsh. No matter how determined we may be, when ascending the tribune, not to be harsh we often reach the opposite point, and let us admit that the responsibility for the harshness of the language is a common one.

### **He Avoids Danger Who Dares to Face It.**

"I do not wish, gentlemen, to end my speech otherwise than in the way the Deputy from Patras ended his own. We are really facing one of the most serious periods of our national history. We have a duty, by examining the facts objectively, to decide what the supreme interests of the nation demand to be done. Not the one who runs away from danger will evade it safely. He will evade it more effectively who will face it. If the cause which brought about the Greek mobilization is to materialize, the dangers threatening us will not be avoided by saying the Lord's Prayer, politically and nationally, and by asking of God to let us live to-day and as for to-morrow, in God we trust. We will avoid the danger if we have a policy of long reach, if we have in view, not what is possible to happen to-day or during the coming months, but that which will surely happen at a not distant time, if we

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should consent, in violation of our obligations of alliance and in disregard of our most vital interests—that our ally be crushed and that the other one who claims to be our opponent become exceedingly strong.

“I repeat that only by facing the danger now, and not only that, but by declaring, and being determined to do so, that we shall not permit such an attack against our ally, both because of the obligations of alliance and because we know what fate is in store for us later on,—only in this manner can we expect to repel the impending danger.

“The Honorable Deputy from Corfu blamed me for another shortcoming,—for my faith, because I told him what I believed. Well, gentlemen, it happens that in politics greater deeds are performed by those who believe than by the skeptics. When in the month of September, 1913, the Government under me found itself in the face of an impending Balkan War, an offensive war, and not the one provided for by our defensive treaty with Bulgaria, and in which Greece was invited to participate without conditions, which could not have been arranged at the moment, the faith which was in me and in my fellow ministers and in the Royal Authority, the faith in the vitality of the Greek People, the faith that by rushing into such a struggle with our small but already well equipped army it was impossible

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for us not to obtain proportionate profits, that faith made us then face a war which all the great men who also possessed military wisdom considered as hopeless for the Balkan Peoples. Do you remember what the Deputy from Corfu then told Parliament? He tried as much as he could to suppress by his patriotism his inward doubt, and in order not to spread distrust among the people he said, as you remember—"Things have reached a point where nothing else is left to us except to reinforce you." I remember him at that moment and I did not misunderstand him. I am sure that he believed that Greece was being dragged to slaughter.

"The Deputy from Corfu sees therefore, that faith in the vitality of the nation is not an element of failure, as he seems to believe. Neither is the skepticism by which others are distinguished a factor for the accomplishment of great deeds. Surely, faith when accompanied by the folding of arms, with indifference to everything that is going on around us, surely such a faith cannot bear fruit. But if the faith be accompanied by constant hard work for preparation of the country to face eventualities, when it foresees the morrow and is not content to patch up things for to-day, then that faith achieves great things; it is the faith which has accomplished in the world great and wonderful deeds. (Great applause.)



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### FOURTH SPEECH.

Delivered September 28, 1915

[The statements made by Mr. Venizelos in his speeches of September 21st, 1915, and especially his declaration that Greece, in doing her duty as an ally of Serbia, would not hesitate to face even Germany in a war, did not meet with King Constantine's approval. Thereupon Venizelos was compelled to resign from office and Mr. Alexander Zaimis, having formed a new cabinet, appeared before Parliament, on September 28th, 1915, and made a statement of his foreign policy, which was commented upon by Mr. Venizelos in the following speech.]

"The development of our affairs for the last seven months demonstrates that we are outside of the basis of our free parliamentary government. For if in the National Sovereignty the right is still recognized to regulate the internal affairs of the country, nevertheless in connection with its foreign relations and the regulation of the national policy we are face to face with a disregard of both the vote of the National Representation and of the verdict of the Greek people, as expressed through the elections. (Applause.)

"But, gentlemen, with this subject I am not going to deal at this moment. The situation, as I had the honor to explain to Parliament a week ago, is more critical than any other perhaps which the country has met with since the National Independence. And in the midst of such a situation it would be extremely venturesome to look for the solution of such thorny problems, to wear out the country with internal strife and

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to render it less capable of facing the difficulties of foreign conditions.

“But no matter how much by the appearance of your Government before this Parliament after its vote of eight days ago, this body has ceased in substance to be the representative of National Sovereignty and has been transformed into a plain assembly, into a society, I might say, of leading citizens, I think, gentlemen, that I fulfill a supreme duty to the Country and to its Government if from this floor I explain the doubts and the worry which I entertain, in case the policy of the Government, which has not been clearly defined by the statements of its Honorable President, should substantially depart from the basis upon which my policy rests.

### **Greece Ought to Assist Serbia, Even If There Were No Alliance.**

“Of the Treaty of Alliance with Serbia the statements of the Government made no mention. I myself am obliged not to touch this question. I will even do something better. By subtraction I will come to suppose that the treaty was never contracted with Serbia. And I will say: ‘Gentlemen, can it be doubted for a moment that the solid, the firm foundation of the foreign affairs of our national policy ought and must be the maintenance, at the price of every sacrifice, of the equilibrium, of the equality of power, let

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me say the word, which has been established by the Treaty of Bucharest? As for myself, I always thought, and think now, that on this point there cannot be a second opinion in the Country. All the governments, on this subject, must have steady conceptions, entirely identical, for only in this manner will it be possible to avoid misunderstandings, which, having found their way elsewhere, caused, perhaps, the present mobilization which we face.

"I suppose, then, I say, that the treaty of alliance has never been concluded with Serbia. And I ask: 'Can we permit, can the Greek State allow, one of the Balkan States to intervene in the great war and to bring it about by its own power that one of these States, which constitutes and assures the substance of equilibrium, should be the more effectively crushed, while the other State, Bulgaria, shall grow in size?'

### **A War Between Greece and Bulgaria.**

"After a second war, gentlemen, the effort is naturally to avoid a third one. But the problem must be faced by the nation at this moment in a manly way. And the problem, the way I understand it, is, not whether we must go to war or avoid the war, but when we must go to war, because it is to our interest to do so, as long as, unfortunately, one of the Balkan States directs its national claims toward all points of the

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horizon, and I may say that it directs its national claims especially towards our frontiers, because the country which we possess in Macedonia and upon which we see that our neighbor has designs is larger and wealthier than the country possessed by the other Balkan Peoples.

"It is asked, therefore: When we have such a neighbor, is it possible to believe that a war between Greece and Bulgaria can be avoided? And if you are obliged to answer with me that the war cannot be avoided, that the war, if not made to-day, will be made to-morrow or the day after, the question before the national opinion is this: Even if we had no treaty with Serbia, must we allow that State to be finally crushed which contributes to the maintenance of the equilibrium and to allow the immediate rival to grow in power beyond proportion, that he may fall upon us tomorrow, when we shall be deprived already of both allies and friends, and that he may succeed in destroying us also?

### **The German Propaganda in Greece.**

"The answer, gentlemen, to these questions of the anxiety of the national soul would not have been doubtful—I admit it—if another factor did not intervene, a factor really serious, the Pan-European War.

"For even those who disagree with me realize that we ought never to allow Bulgaria to crush



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Serbia alone, that she may later turn against us; but they think that as Bulgaria, in attacking Serbia, is co-operating with one of the combinations of the great European Powers, it is to our interest to postpone the settlement of our accounts with that neighbor, who does not deny having such national accounts with us, to postpone it, I say, until after the European War.

“And I have to explain, gentlemen, whether really that most serious factor must make us hesitate as to the policy which we must follow.

“I know, gentlemen, that the question has been repeatedly discussed, not in this chamber but outside of it, as to who shall be the final victor in the great European War. It has been also discussed, although the value of this question has been often disregarded, which it would be to our interest should be the victor in this great struggle that is being waged almost in the whole world. As regards the first problem, I am not competent to give a categorical answer. And I doubt whether there is anybody on earth who can safely say what the outcome of the European War is going to be. But it happened, gentlemen, that as a result of the opinions of certain military circles among us, truly the most competent to have an opinion, but who pursued their studies in Germany and who naturally learned not merely to appreciate but to admire



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Germany's organization and German preparation in everything and especially in military affairs, it happened, I say, as a result of the opinions of these military circles, with the help of the foreign propaganda which has used part of our press as its tool, that the opinion has been implanted that the question of the outcome of the European War cannot be in doubt, that it is a question which must be solved positively in favor of the European combination in which Germany is participating.

"I said a little while ago, gentlemen, that German preparation and organization are really wonderful. But if that organization in everything, and especially the military preparation, did not succeed in the first months of the war, when it faced enemies who were not only not equally prepared, but most of whom, unfortunately for them, were not even sufficiently prepared, if, I repeat, she did not succeed, during the first months, in obtaining decisive results, I believe—and one need not be a military man to judge upon the broad lines of this question—I believe that, an immediate and lightning success not having been obtained at the beginning, the final issue of the struggle cannot but be at least wholly doubtful for the combination of which the German colossus is a part. For the other European combination draws from both human and financial sources which are twice the

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size of those from which the other combination draws. And as the time passes and the opportunity is offered for a completion of the preparation of the other side, which in the beginning was incomplete, by so much does the victory of one combination, which by some people used to be considered as assured, become more and more doubtful.

“But, gentlemen, what we must give our attention to at this moment is this: The issue being doubtful, is it to our interest to settle our pending accounts with our neighbor, or to postpone the settlement for some future time? Certainly I cannot say that Greece, being a small State and disposing of a small military force, will be able to contribute to the European War a share which will be decisive for its general issue. But, gentlemen, if Greece had followed the policy proposed by me, she would not have entered directly into the European War, neither would she have made a campaign extending to the Danube. She would have had only to remain armed and to declare to Bulgaria that she would not permit her to attack Serbia, for in such a case Greece would counter-attack Bulgaria. And in this, the southeastern theatre of war, the force that Greece could have offered would have been worthy of attention, would have produced substantial results. In the manner that Bulgaria, which is also a small State, succeeds by her possible par-

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ticipation in offering colossal advantages for the prosecution of the war in this southeastern part to the other group of the warring powers, in the same manner Greece by participating in order to prevent Bulgaria from attacking Serbia, could offer decisive assistance, so decisive that one might be sure that, even if our allies the Serbians were compelled to retreat on the northern part of this southeastern theatre of war, it would have been impossible for our enemies to reach the southern parts of this theatre, parts which would have been occupied by the Greek Army, by the remnants of the retreating Serbian Army and by the foreign force which would have come to our assistance. It would have been impossible for a great army supplied by a single railroad line to reach these parts, while our forces would have been abundantly served by the sea route of Salonica and Cavalla. And I have the firm conviction that, no matter what the issue of the war might be on the other fronts, the negotiations of peace would find Greece advanced into Bulgaria and at any rate occupying, at least together with her allies, the whole of her own territory, and, with such a condition of affairs, Greece would sit at the Congress of Peace having the support of four of the Great Powers, become already her allies.

“But, gentlemen, I deem it necessary to examine the matter also from another point of view.

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I said that the question has been examined both in the press and by public opinion as to which it would be to our interest should be the final victor in this great war. The foreign propaganda tried to convince the Greek People that the interest of the country lies in the defeat of the Western Powers and in the victory of the combination participated in by Turkey and now by Bulgaria. And we came, gentlemen, to the point of witnessing failures in the Dardanelles campaign being greeted with joy. But the national soul, gentlemen, never erred, and it is impossible for it to err, especially to-day, when Bulgaria has definitely taken that side. The victory of the Entente Powers to-day, if, with Bulgaria participating in the war, we were also compelled to participate, the victory, I say, of the Entente Powers would serve the Greek interests more than it could be possible not merely for optimistic statesmen, but even for frenzied poets, I should say, to imagine or to hope for. The defeat of the combination to which Bulgaria would belong would mean the final burial of the views and claims of that State for leadership in the Balkans; it would mean also her territorial restriction in the peninsula, while at the same time it would mean the extension of the Greek State on the coast of Asia Minor and in the Balkan Peninsula. I am sure that the Deputy from Corfu must be again saying to himself: 'Look



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at the optimist, how he is spreading his wings and what views he is opening before our eyes! But I have a duty to point out to the Honorable Deputy from Corfu that he could more reasonably have sneered at my hopes and anticipations, if at the beginning of the first war against Turkey, I should have told him—if I had known it myself—that our frontiers would be removed from Papapoulion to the Nestos River than he can be skeptical to-day when I tell him that our frontiers could be removed from the Nestos to the Maeandros and the Hermos.

### **Germany's Promises.**

“But, on the other hand, what are the consequences of the victory of the combination including Turkey and Bulgaria going to be, what will be its results for our national interests? They are going to be an increase of power for Turkey, an increase of power, which did not worry me at another time, but which does worry me now, since in Turkey the Young Turk regime has prevailed. And it cannot but worry me exceedingly, because you know that with this increase of power will be connected the destruction of the rest of the Hellenic Race, the uprooting of the Greek race in Turkey. With this victory will be connected the crushing of Serbia, of Serbia, which is one of the factors of Balkan



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equilibrium. With this victory will be connected the overgrowth of Bulgaria's power. It is said, gentlemen,—and I know it—that this combination, or at least one of its members, the directing member at that, promises us that we have nothing to lose, it promises us our territorial integrity. I also know that it promises us an extension in Southern Albania, a small one surely, for I do not think there is anybody in this chamber who is disposed to see the Greek State extended beyond the point where the activity of Hellenic Civilization offers us a solid foundation for further civilizing work. If you will consult the map, gentlemen, you will see that this section is too small, after the occupation by us of Northern Epirus. They further recognized that the district Doiran-Gevgheli,—which really constitutes the key to our Macedonian frontiers,—must come eventually to Greece. The first promises I heard from persons holding official positions, while what I am going to say now I heard from persons not having official positions. I heard, then, it being said that they promise us even Monastir, about which really there has never been a question, and also the Dodecaneson and Cyprus. But let us pay no attention to the unsophisticated ones who would believe that a change in the actual situation of the islands can be effected against the will of the Powers dominating the sea. For my part, I should be happy if,

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by following a policy other than the one I suggested, we should succeed, not in taking new islands, but only in keeping from danger those islands that belong to us now."

### **The Dangers From a Great Bulgaria.**

"There are, then, some people who say: 'Since they promise us our territorial integrity and, furthermore, give us the key of Doiran-Gevgheli, together with a small extension in Northern Albania, why should we not be satisfied with these, so as not to face the dangers of a war?' But the answer to this question, gentlemen, cannot be doubtful. The integrity of the Greek State is gravely affected the moment its relation to the rival States in the Balkans, which has been established by the Treaty of Bucharest, is materially upset. It would be less dangerous for our national future, if Greece were even deprived of a small portion of her territory, provided the other peoples were restricted to a proportionate degree. But to-day, when Greece is not to become smaller, but even to get some of the small crumbs from this table, which has been spread by the European War and from which our rival is to get a colossal development, I ask you, gentlemen: When Serbia shall have disappeared, when Bulgaria shall have become overgrown by the occupation of a great part or

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of the whole section of Serbian Macedonia, and perhaps of a great part of the Serbian Kingdom, as it was before 1912, and also by her coming out on the Adriatic, I ask, what Greece's position is going to be in the face of such an arrangement of Balkan affairs? In what position is the Country to find itself, either to-morrow or two years from now, when the promise becoming extinct that Bulgaria shall not be allowed to attack Greece to-day she should want to settle her accounts with us? We shall have, gentlemen, then to face the war which we are trying to avoid to-day, and we shall be alone, without allies and without friends in a war with Bulgaria who will be the ally of Turkey, Austria and Germany. I do not mean to say by this that Bulgaria's allies will participate in the war; I only mean to say that our opponent will be able to rely diplomatically, too, upon three Powers, and we shall have to face the break with Bulgaria, while we shall be destitute of allies whom we shall have abandoned, and destitute of friends, for we shall have no one.

“We are not called upon to settle the question whether there must be a war or not. The question is when it shall be possible to face this war with greater hopes of success and with less fears of danger and disaster. For my part I cannot but shudder in face of the situation which would be created for Greece if what I foresee were to

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come true, if Serbia being crushed to-day, we were to see extending alongside our northern frontiers a state which should be materially stronger than our own. I cannot suppose that the political experience of the present government and the patriotism of its members can be limited to viewing the situation only for the time during which they shall probably be in power, during the time of the present war. It would not be worthy of men of the standing of the members of the present government not to look also at the future, and indeed at the immediate future, perhaps the morrow.

### **Zaimis' Ministerial Statement Entirely Indefinite.**

"Gentlemen, your ministerial statement does not give us the means of knowing what your policy is going to be in case of an attack of Serbia by Bulgaria. I do not complain of this vagueness. But I am compelled to take it for granted that it is possible for the present government, in the further development of the situation, to find that neutrality, even an armed neutrality, must be maintained to the end, even if Bulgaria gave up neutrality and attacked Serbia.

"And on this point I will ask the members of the Government to pardon me if I give them some advice, to which I should not be entitled even on



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account of my age, but for which the right is given me by the fact that I repay a debt to two prominent members of the Government, to the Honorable Deputy from Corfu and to the Honorable Deputy from Patras, and I hope that the other members will pardon me if I think that in the payment of this debt I am allowed to give some advice.

“If, I say, we were to suppose that in the development of matters the Government should not think it imperative to participate in the struggle, even in case of Bulgaria’s participation, I think I should tell them this: Let us not deceive ourselves. We certainly maintain neutrality, and I should even say that our neutrality may appear as being friendly to one of the two groups, if for no other reason than for the existence of our treaty with Serbia, towards which our neutrality could not have been, from the beginning, otherwise than exceptionally friendly and favorable. But if our armed neutrality continues, from disposition and in accordance with the Greek soul, to be favorable in fact to one side, however, by its results our neutrality is nothing but exclusively profitable to the opposite combination. Even if we wanted, gentlemen, even if we didn’t have the sincerest disposition towards neutrality, which I do not deny to the Government, even if we wanted, perchance, to offer to the other combination a greater assistance, we could not have



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done more than we do. By this I mean to say that the service which Greece is going to render to the Austro-German combination by her possible persistence in neutrality to the end, that this service is great, and it is only reasonable and natural that we should obtain proportionate profits in exchange for this service.

"I have heard it said that it is not permitted to us to look to an understanding with either combination, for in that case we should expose ourselves to the anger of the other combination. I do not agree with that at all. By maintaining a favorable neutrality to the end, possibly by not going to the assistance of Serbia, we will not expose ourselves because, in rendering those services against our will to the other combination, we took care to get some profits in exchange; the anger would be justified because by our policy we serve the other combination, not because we tried to get some profit out of this policy of ours, which we think, according to the conception of the Government, to be imposed upon us by our national interests. I should say, therefore, that if the policy of the Government would shape itself by facts as to be such to the end, it would be incumbent upon the State to obtain such profits as it is possible to obtain owing to the services it renders, not because it wants to be useful to the other combination, but because it thinks that it is serving its own interests.

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"It is a matter of daily occurrence to see states which in case of war, while remaining neutral for the sake of their own interests, are securing profits in exchange for their neutrality alone. But what should be the gains that in such a case I should think it would be incumbent upon us to try to secure?

### **German Promises of Concessions Should Be Made Through the Proper Channels.**

"And let me remark at this point that the pursuit of these gains I should want for other reasons, too, so that it may be arranged through the regular channels and under the responsibility of the proper officials, because it would be proper that the responsibility for such understandings and for their possible results should fall upon the Government; and I know that the present Government at least would not wish to dodge such responsibilities and try to place them elsewhere. I would say that in such a case it should be required that an understanding be had with that combination which we should even unwillingly serve by such a policy, in order, first, to know what Bulgaria is going to get in exchange for her participation in this war, because the knowledge of this matter may be for you a useful element for judging whether the anxieties and the fears which I entertain are as well founded

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as I think, or whether they are colored to exaggeration. Second, in order to determine more surely what we are going to have in exchange, that is to say, our extension in Southern Albania, the cession to us of the keys Dorian-Gevgheli, which, by the way, I think that we have a duty to hasten to occupy on time without postponing it until after the war. And, in the third place, I would ask that the guaranty of the integrity of the Country should not be limited only to the period of the war, when it will be of a very small value, but that it should be extended to a number of years, say to ten years, so that on the morrow of the end of the war we should not find ourselves in anxiety over a third war against us, of a duel with Bulgaria, in order that we may have time to develop and organize the resources of our new possessions and our military forces, and be able to face that duel, which is to be fought between us and the neighboring country at a time when we shall be without friends and without allies. I would furthermore say that it would be just and proportionate to the services which we are rendering by maintaining neutrality to the end, if we asked that by the intervention of Austria and Germany an exchange should be demanded relating to the populations of the two countries which hereafter are to be bordering on each other for hundreds of miles, to the end that Bulgarian populations which are still

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living on Greek territory shall be transferred to Bulgaria and the Greek populations which are still living, which still, after all these devastations, are still living in Bulgaria, should be transferred to Greek territory. This, gentlemen, would be one of the best guaranties that the Balkan status quo, as it would emerge from the present war, is upon the whole sincerely recognized by the states interested and that at least our opponent should be deprived of the great argument that he is fighting for the realization of claims founded upon a pretended ethnological basis.

“Allow me to say, gentlemen, that not even this would be done if we allowed ourselves to be carried by circumstances and if we came after the termination of the European War to a settlement of Balkan affairs such as the one I surely foresee; with the equilibrium of the Treaty of Bucharest upset, with Bulgaria materially stronger than Greece, we shall create an anxiety for the national soul, concerning the issue of the inevitable collision, that will render the life of this Country unbearable.

“I do not wish, gentlemen, at this solemn moment to be bitter towards anybody; I do not wish to be misunderstood if I say to you: Look out and see what was the Greece you handed over to the Liberal party and what is the Greece it de-

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livers to you ; be careful that you do not deliver her to your successors smaller.

“I need furthermore to remind you that when in February I suggested the idea of our participating in the war in exchange for concessions in Asia Minor, the principal argument opposed to my policy was the Bulgarian danger. The Bulgarian danger was considered so great and so grave and of such a nature as entirely to absorb every thought and the whole activity of the Country, that you did not even consider it as permissible to think about concessions on our part of 2,000 kilometers of national territory in the Balkans, in exchange for territory fifty times as great in Asia Minor, for you claimed that our whole attention ought to be concentrated in the Balkans, that no matter what our increase was elsewhere, it would be a hard blow for us if we saw Bulgaria increased in territory in the Balkans and becoming stronger in relation to us. And to-day again, when I submit the opinion that we must not allow Bulgaria, by her participation in the war, to secure colossal territorial concessions without corresponding concessions in our favor, to-day, when by the opposition into which Bulgaria put herself towards the four Great Powers, in case of their being victorious, we should see the Bulgarian danger blown away, we should see the historical struggle that has been waged between us and the Bulgarians for the



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last thirteen centuries coming to a definite solution, perhaps forever, or at least for a very long time, in favor of Hellenism, to-day again, I say, there are doubts and objections to my policy, and it is being forgotten that it is the Bulgarian danger which ought to be the guide of our every action.

“Gentlemen, I have finished, I have said what I thought I ought to say. I feel that in so doing I have done a duty which was imposed upon me at this critical moment of our national life. I tried to show the colossal dangers resulting from the possible application of a policy other than the one I suggested eight days ago. I further more tried to point out in what manner the application of another policy, which in my opinion is very dangerous, might become less dangerous, under certain pre-suppositions.

“In so doing I have done my duty. Needless to add that nobody prays God more ardently than I and my friends that facts may prove that I am mistaken in my forebodings and that you are more correct in your perception of the future.” (Great applause from the floor and the galleries.)

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## FIFTH SPEECH

Delivered October 21, 1915

[In the course of a discussion, at the above mentioned session of the Greek Parliament, it became evident that the Zaimis cabinet had not only departed from Mr. Venizelos' foreign policy but that they were disregarding both the rights and the sentiments of Parliament. Mr. Venizelos, who although resigned from office, still held the majority in Parliament, made the following speech in which he upheld the rights of Parliament, at the same time strongly protesting against the foreign policy inaugurated by the Zaimis cabinet.]

"Gentlemen, since the day that your policy was more clearly outlined, especially since the time the Bulgarian attack on Serbia began, we have been in deep pain for the future that you are preparing for the Country. According to our conviction, by allowing to-day, as we do, or rather as we did—for the matter perhaps belongs already to the past—by having allowed our opponent of thirteen centuries in the Balkan Peninsula to crush our ally and friend and upset the equilibrium which was established by the Treaty of Bucharest and to create a great Bulgaria, you allow a new situation to be created, which cannot but surely, within a very short time, if not during the war, owing to the possible existence of guaranties, but at any rate after its termination and not in the distant future, you render it possible that in the near future we may face a struggle which is inevitable between these two peoples as long as one of them, our opponent,

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aspires to supremacy in the Balkan Peninsula, you allow, I say, this struggle, which is inevitable, to be conducted under the most unfavorable conditions. For the question has been wrongly presented to the Greek People as a question of a peace party and a war party. We are not called upon to decide whether it is better for us to live in peace with the other peoples of the Balkan Peninsula or whether we must make war against them.

### **A War With Bulgaria Inevitable.**

“I claim, gentlemen, that I have been and am still one of the most peace-loving of men. I have been disposed to painful sacrifices in order to secure a lasting peace among the Balkan Peoples by a peaceful distribution of territory,—for the creation, if possible, of a Balkan League. But so long as, after all the painful sacrifices to which we were then disposed to go, we did not succeed in obtaining the distribution without a war, so long as we have ascertained from the attitude of our opponent until the last moment that it was impossible for him to give up the views for the creation of an exclusive supremacy in the Balkans, so long as we came to the second war and to the written protests under which the Treaty of Bucharest was signed,—for anybody who does not wish to be blind, a new war be-

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tween Greece and Bulgaria is inevitable and imminent. The rival nation, gentlemen, will not content itself by occupying and annexing a great part of the allied country. It does not conceal for even a minute its views and its claims also upon the country which we occupied in advancing by land during the war of 1912. Its claims extend to the Haliacmon, almost to the old frontiers of Greece. And when we see this disaster being prepared by the policy you have followed, when we see that we have to face after one or two or three or four years, perhaps before we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of our national independence, the collision that will then be a duel with that Bulgaria increased in the meantime to colossal proportions, while we shall be without allies any more or friends, it is easily explainable why we are in deep pain these days."

A DEPUTY: "So then the King wants the ruin of the Greek People?"

VENIZELOS: "I thank the Honorable Deputy for his interruption. I would have avoided mentioning the King's name if I were not invited to do so, but it is impossible for me, when invited, not to speak upon this point with all due respect and with the observance of both the letter and the spirit of our liberal form of government.

"You uttered a phrase which is exceedingly anti-parliamentary. In a parliamentary régime the King has no policy. Only small politicians can

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entrench themselves, in case of need, behind the King. (Great applause both from the floor and the galleries.) Only small politicians can conduct the struggles against their more powerful opponents by hiding behind the Royal Authority, which has no responsibility, and by claiming that they support its policy. (Applause.)

“Those men, if they believe what they say, if they really claim that in a parliamentary régime a Royal policy may exist, not merely temporary for bringing about a change of government that an appeal be made to the people, but also a positive Royal policy for the exercise of a responsible policy, are shown to be unworthy to represent the Greek People. (Applause.) The Honorable Deputy asked me whether the King wants the ruin of the Greek People. No, gentlemen. It never came, neither is it possible to come to anybody’s mind, that the king of a State can wish the ruin of that State. The thing is too absurd even to think of, so that it is improper, I might say, that such a question should be asked of me. But I ask of you: Do you know that such a government of a people is not a constitutional kingdom, is not a democracy under a king, like the one we have been living under during the last half century, but it is a monarchy under which the destinies of the country must be placed in the hands of one man? If you know that, you have a duty to conduct a propaganda in



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order to convince the people and ask, at the proper time and legally, for a change of our form of government. But you know that if you attempt such a thing your effort will be fruitless. The Greek People know that the only form of government under which they may live and progress is a constitutional kingdom, a democracy under a king. (Great applause.)

“And once the King’s name has been brought before Parliament and I am compelled to deal upon it more extensively, I tell you that I accept, according to our régime, the disagreement between the Crown and the responsible Government when the Crown believes that the responsible Government is not in harmony with popular opinion. Under such a spirit the disagreement between the Crown and the Government took place in February, 1915, but that disagreement has been removed by the popular vote. If you believe that the Crown is permitted in the sense of our free institutions not to consider the verdict rendered through free elections, free at least in the sense of the struggle of the opposition, but not free in the sense of the disposition and of the means that have been used by the Government in conducting the elections; if you believe that the Crown has a right,—even when the appeal has been made and the people have decided,—not to follow the expressed will of the people, but to proceed to a new dissolution of Parliament, in

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order, ostensibly, to ask for a new verdict of the people, and again for a new verdict, that means that you accept the fact that our liberal institutions, under which we have lived for half a century, have become worse than the rag that some people considered international treaties to be.

"The question, gentlemen, is put between you and ourselves, not as a question of patriotism. Nobody has a right to deny another man's patriotism. The question is put as a question of policy, of a purposeful policy, of a right policy. If you will tell me that you have in favor of your opinion, perhaps, the opinion of the King, I will tell you that you commit a constitutional impropriety, but I will add that from the point of view of political correctness this is immaterial to me. I know that the King of the Hellenes is a distinguished general, that he has an exceptional and special knowledge of military matters. But you will allow me, gentlemen, with all due respect to the person of the King, to say that the King of the Hellenes never had under the Constitution an occasion to exercise, as a responsible statesman, the exclusive authority, so that he might have at least the experience necessary thereto.

"But, gentlemen, you will ask me, perhaps, if such is my opinion and my conviction of the policy which we were following, why did I come

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myself to contribute, to the extent of my power, in facilitating the work which you undertook to meet the foreign situation. This explanation, gentlemen, I took the occasion to offer in a previous session before this House. Considering that we are entirely out of the basis of our free institutions, considering that the Crown took into its hands the direction of the affairs of the State and that it has found you ready to accept the responsibility of such a policy, I thought that it was incumbent upon me to allow you to carry out this policy, after trying to enlighten you by what I told Parliament in a previous session, but without success, and after I had found out that there was no other means of my preventing the carrying out of the policy which you suggested to the Crown and to Parliament.

“I had no other means, because it was evident that the opinion of Parliament was not being taken into consideration for it had been expressed on the eve of our resignation, neither was the opinion of the Country considered, for it had been expressed only three months before. What would I have gained by trying to oppose your policy, and, if I still happened to represent the majority of Parliament, what would I have served by making it express its lack of confidence to you? Would the Government have been changed the following day? Would I have been called the following day as representing the ex-

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pressed opinion of the National Representation, in order to carry out my policy which three months before had been approved by the Greek People?

“What then would I have served, if I had not accepted the opportunity to help you to expedite the legislative work which was absolutely necessary for you? It has been supposed, gentlemen, that the policy of the Liberal Party, the policy of toleration towards the governmental situation that has been created, was due to the fact that the Liberal Government did not wish to face a new election. The supposition was unfounded in this, that in the executive authority the integral right rested to conduct the elections at the moment it thought it was more suitable to its political interests. In what manner would I have prevented, by consenting to help the enactment of indispensable legislative work, in what manner would I have prevented the elections being held when you thought that the time was suitable for you to do so? But if I had forced matters by a vote of lack of confidence to the Government, I should have undertaken, without any reason, responsibilities which I did not want the Liberal Party to undertake. You could, in order to conduct the elections, proceed to demobilization, which possibly the foreign circumstances did not allow you to order, and if as a result of the demobilization dangers would have super-



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vened against the integrity of the Country, it would have been possible, not surely on your part, but on the part of public opinion, that the responsibility, if not wholly, at least in a great measure, should be placed upon the Opposition represented by the Liberal Party which by the vote of lack of confidence would have caused the untimely holding of the elections. You see, then, the reason for which the Liberal Party consented to co-operate with you up to this moment and for which it would have been disposed to co-operate even further, if you were not disposed yourselves—as you are to-night—to discontinue this co-operation. But from this point to the supposition, erroneously conceived by the Honorable Minister of Justice—to the supposition that the Liberal Party approved of the policy followed by the Government, and that it strengthened the Government by its full confidence, there is a distance which is impossible for us to cover.

“The Government, this evening, seized upon an incident that has been raised and sought to bring about the break of this co-operation. We cannot do otherwise than accept the break of this co-operation, because it would be impossible for us to tolerate the Governmental machine’s getting outside of the institutions of the country and at the same time to consent that the National Representation, which carries the sovereignty of the people and from which, according to our liberal



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institutions, all authorities emanate, it would be impossible to consent that any disregard should be shown the National Representation on the part of the executive branch of the Government. The way I tried to have this question arranged this evening, I showed that the intention of the Liberal Party was not to create difficulties for you without a superior cause, although, as I have explained, I consider that your policy is leading to a national disaster. I explained how the Liberal Party does not wish to create difficulties for you. But if you think that our disposition not to create difficulties can be pushed so far as to cause us to accept the fact that the National Representation may not only cease to regulate, by its vote, the destinies of the Country, but begin to tolerate even offences and insults from the executive authority, you are mistaken. And I will tell you that there is only one policy that is imposed upon us. As long as we are entirely outside the basis of our liberal government, as long as we do not tolerate this House even as a co-worker, unless she is disposed to accept your insults, you would do as well to suspend, officially, too, the operation of our parliamentary government. Your responsibility will be lighter if you will have the courage to suggest to the Crown the idea of issuing a decree suspending the opera-

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tion of the constitution, at least until after the war.

“Then everybody would know where the responsibility lies, and consequently we should not be confronted with the confusion of constitutional conceptions, owing to which Parliament is called upon to render a decision against which an appeal is made to the sovereignty of the people, after the verdict of which the Parliament produced by the elections is compelled to co-operate with those who have been disapproved by the popular verdict, so that they may have a right to vilify and humiliate the National Representation.”

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### **SIXTH SPEECH**

**Delivered October 21, 1915**

#### **The History of Concessions.**

"I am compelled to take the floor again, for I have a duty to answer the honorable members of the Government who took the floor after my first speech. I will begin by answering the last speech of the Deputy from Corfu.

"The Deputy from Corfu asserted that the facts come to prove the failure of my policy both in February and in September.

"The Honorable Deputy from Corfu, in order to prove how much my policy was mistaken in February, told you that I was then thinking and claiming that the attack of Gallipoli by the Allies was to be brought to an end within a very few days, and that I was sure of the success of the operation. It was impossible, however, for the Deputy from Corfu, seeing that under the Government of the Honorable Deputy from Patras mention was made of the Memoranda which I had handed to his Majesty the King, and an opportunity was offered to him to learn that besides the two Memoranda that were published, there was also a third one, it was impossible for him, when he came to power, not to have asked to know what the contents were of that third Memorandum.

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"If he would have read that he would have seen that I did not dare, nor could I express an opinion as to the success of the operation in the Dardanelles with small military forces."

THEOTOKIS: "I will ask you, if that army division were destroyed, would you have sent another?"

VENIZELOS: "I had no obligation to."

THEOTOKIS: "Didn't you say that you were an ally, while one army division was sufficient?"

VENIZELOS: "Yes, an ally under the express condition of participating in the war with a definite military force."

THEOTOKIS: "That was impossible."

VENIZELOS: "That was the fact."

GOUNARIS: "Had the proposition been accepted?"

VENIZELOS: "The Honorable Deputy from Patras is asking me whether that proposition had been accepted. I answer him, no. Because my suggestion had not yet even been approved by the Crown."

GOUNARIS: "That proposition had not been responsibly submitted. But I ask you: was there an occasion for it to become an object of inquiry by those to whom such assistance was to be offered, and what was the reception it met with?"

VENIZELOS: "Certainly they had been sounded previously, and I know that the participation was

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possible, but under what conditions I do not know. After the second council of the Crown, which was held in the presence of the King, and at which all others, with the exception of the Honorable Deputy from Corfu, recommended the adoption of my policy, the Honorable Deputy from Corfu also recommended to the Crown the adoption of my policy, because, as he said, although he did not agree with that policy, he recognized the fact that his ideas were very antiquated and out of harmony with public opinion."

THEOTOKIS: "I said then, following my practice of absolute sincerity and after having explained my opinions at length, that my opinions were not acceptable to the majority of the Greek people. Those were my words, and I had a duty to say that to the Crown, which had asked for my opinion."

VENIZELOS: "You said that your opinions were antiquated and they were not shared by the majority of the Greek people. And I say that, after these statements, you were telling the Crown nothing else but: 'I also recommend you to follow the policy which the man chosen by the majority is recommending to you. I am the only one disagreeing with Mr. Venizelos, but you must know that I cannot carry out my policy, because the people do not want to follow it.' And I ask this, at the moment when you did not dare then to assume the Government with an opposite policy,



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what else were you doing than telling the Crown: 'Don't think that I can take over the Government, for I am following a policy which is not approved by the Greek people?' "

THEOTOKIS: "That is plain, for I maintained the opinion that I was advocating. What could I have said to the Crown?"

VENIZELOS: "I don't blame you for that. You were saying that you disagreed with my policy, but that you did not dare to assume the application of a contrary policy, because you knew that the opinion of the Greek people was opposed to it. And after that second council, believing really that my policy was about to be again carried out, since it was favored by the common opinion of all the men who at different times had governed Greece, and also by the Deputy from Corfu, I invited in, that evening, the three representatives of the Entente Powers and told them: 'There was a second session of the Crown Council to-day. It is possible that my policy will be accepted. The King reserved his answer to me until to-morrow. Such being the case, I cannot to-day take any steps through our ambassadors accredited at the courts of the Entente Powers, for I have not yet the King's consent. I give you this information, however, so that you may have your Governments prepared, and if I receive the King's consent to-morrow I will apply to them through our ambassadors, who will thus find the ground prepared.' "

## **The Conditions of the Participation of Greece in the Dardanelles Campaign.**

GOUNARIS: "On these soundings, which were transmitted to the foreign governments, did you have occasion to see in the ministry files what the answers were? In other words, were those soundings accepted under the form which you gave them?"

VENIZELOS: "I resigned on a Saturday. I don't think there was sufficient time for the answers of the Powers to be received."

GOUNARIS: "You remained in office until the following Wednesday."

VENIZELOS: "I don't remember. But you, who have a better memory, will please remind me."

GOUNARIS: "The answers were these: One of the Powers answered that it would be expected of us to participate in the operation with all our forces. The other Power answered that your proposition was not very agreeable to it, because our participation in the struggle was not in accordance with the public opinion of that country, so long as the struggle would end with the capture of the capital of the state then bordering on our country."

VENIZELOS: "I don't know whether these were the answers of the Powers. I do know that one of the Powers was not favorably disposed to the participation of Greece in the operation. But I

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knew that the two other Powers, which were conducting the operations, were disposed favorably, and that they had undertaken to convince the third Power, too. But if we saw that our propositions were not accepted, that meant that we were not to participate in the struggle, either.

"You were less justified, in such a case, for having undertaken, although you were a minority—a very small minority—to govern Greece and to conduct the elections, which you did conduct, in order to prevent a plan which could not have been carried out. But you have no right to tell me the plan was doomed to failure. And I reminded you that it was so sure that our participation in the war with very small military forces would have been accepted, that even after my resignation from power it was hinted to you that the participation of Greece would be accepted even only with her fleet—even with her light fleet."

GOUNARIS: "That was much later."

VENIZELOS: "It wasn't later. I remember well that during the first days after you assumed power—it wasn't but two or three days, it was less than a week after my resignation from power—that you received a telegram from London from a person holding an official position, but who was not our ambassador at London, and who transmitted to you a confidential communication from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and now

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Minister of Munitions, Mr. Lloyd George, of what had taken place in the cabinet meeting. I am sorry that you considered that communication as unworthy of attention because it did not come from the Minister of Foreign Affairs himself."

GOUNARIS: "You do not remember what took place during your tenure of office, but you remember what we have done, which you have never learned."

VENIZELOS: "You tell me that the proposition of the participation of Greece would not have been accepted. I tell you that, if it would not have been accepted, you were the more inexcusable for having undertaken to assume power. Later on, there were negotiations for our participation by our fleet only. And that shows how serious the suggestion was of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, which you considered as unworthy of attention because it did not emanate from Sir Edward Grey."

GOUNARIS: "I ask you whether the proposition you are speaking about had been accepted, for that proposition is always brought forward as something which, having come from this side or from that side, had been accepted from that side. And it has been brought out by the discussion that there were objections and difficulties from that side. And I will request you to accept the explanation that I cannot see any importance to your argument, that, then, if I considered that

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the proposition could not be accepted, I ought not to have consented to succeed you, for at the time I consented to succeed you we were facing a policy which meant formulating what you had formulated in your proposition. I thought that Greece ought not to go after that, and I had a duty to combat any action which had a tendency to go after it."

VENIZELOS: "But you have no right to come here and say that what I endeavored to attain was not obtainable."

GOUNARIS: "I did not say obtainable. I told you that it wasn't a proposition that came from this side."

VENIZELOS: "It was a proposition that came from this side. At that time, then, if, I repeat, Honorable Deputy from Corfu, you had an interest in reading my Memorandum, you would have seen that I was saying that the operation, if successful, would be entirely in accord with our policy and bring us all the advantages we expected—that is, the concessions in Asia Minor; and, I said, if the operation should fail, then it would be abandoned, and then the army division which we would have sent, together with the European armies, would go to Macedonia, if the Bulgarian danger, which you then overestimated, presented itself."

THEOTOKIS: "In other words, not even that was sure."



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### **With Greece's Immediate Co-operation the Dardanelles Would Have Been Captured.**

VENIZELOS: "Honorable Deputy from Corfu, you don't know perhaps that the operation against the Dardanelles if, when it was started by the English fleet, it had been accompanied by only one army division would have succeeded. (Applause.) Those are permitted to deny this who do not wish to know. But the Honorable Deputy from Corfu, only from my policy of the month of February, was thinking, it appears, that I had it in my mind that by participating in the war with only one army division, we should have added such weight and force to the operation of the Allies that it would have brought about surely, and from a military point of view, the desired effect.

"The Honorable Deputy from Corfu, although possessed of such a long political experience, did not succeed in seeing through the policy which I had then chosen, through my broader political object, he did not succeed in perceiving that if we had abandoned neutrality at that time, through that weak military participation of ours, there was every probability that Bulgaria, too, and Roumania would have left neutrality and even Italy, which has done so, at any rate, after a short time. (Great applause.) That this is so, I say, is proved by one fact, that came to the

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knowledge of all of us, by the fact that, on the day following, the Prime Minister of Bulgaria, he and Gennadieff being the only two politicians in Bulgaria who were friendly to Austria and Germany, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Radislavoff, went to the palace and asked the king to sign a decree of the mobilization of the Bulgarian army, thinking that we were already abandoning neutrality, and only on the following day, when it became known that our operation was frustrated, was the ministerial crisis in Bulgaria averted."

THEOTOKIS: "This proves that the thing was impossible with one army division, for if what you say should have happened, we cannot admit, that in the face of that mobilization you would have been content with only one army division."

VENIZELOS: "No. I would have myself immediately ordered a general mobilization, too. Honorable Deputy from Corfu, I think that in a discussion about matters so serious we cannot bring forward such arguments. Is it possible for you to imagine that if our participation with the one army division were accepted, and if, owing to that, Bulgaria abandoned neutrality, too, and marched against Constantinople with all her forces, we should have remained with only the mobilization of one army division and with such an insignificant participation in the military operations?"

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“But it was natural that, at the time when we had both the Bulgarians and the Roumanians as companions in arms, we should have undertaken the campaign with all our forces, in order to occupy the territories which were conceded to us. I do not understand, therefore, what the Honorable Deputy from Corfu means by his remark that later on we should have asked to participate with all our forces.”

THEOTOKIS: “It has a meaning. I said that, because you interrupted me especially to remind me that it was only a question of one army division, and I said then that a state going to war can never be satisfied with one army division, for the destruction of one division will have as a result the sending of a second and a third division, and I will give an example.”

VENIZELOS: “Do not go to another matter. I am asking you this: Why, when we should have sent one army division we should also have been compelled to mobilize?”

THEOTOKIS: “To prove to you that calling one division to the colors would never have been sufficient.”

VENIZELOS: “I will answer that. Concerning our participation with one division, I cannot accept your theory that it is impossible for a state to participate in an allied war with limited military forces. Concerning the second matter, did I think that it wasn't to the interest of Greece to

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fight, even with all her force, to establish the great state which she was about to establish to the extent embraced by my previsions? Did I expect Greece safely to gain all these great successes with only one army division? If I proposed our participation in the struggle with one army division, this was done because I could not employ a larger part of our army for the operation, while Bulgaria's attitude was not determined. But if Bulgaria were drawn too—as she probably would have been—to participate in the struggle, we should have surely participated therein ourselves then with all our forces.

“This much in connection with the operation of the Dardanelles, of which the Honorable Deputy from Corfu has spoken. But the Honorable Deputy from Corfu came also to the question of the elections of the 31st of May and asked: ‘What was the people’s verdict at those elections? Was it upon the operation of the Dardanelles?’ Certainly not, there was no question of that, any more. But the people expressed their opinion at the elections upon one thing, that, knowing that my policies, both internal and foreign, in their general lines which were set, not toward your combination, but toward the opposite combination, and with respect to the obligations arising from the Treaty of Alliance, the people said, in answer to the question put to them by the Crown, that they wanted to entrust their fortunes again,

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during the war, to the Liberal Party. (Great applause.)

"The Honorable Minister told you that, because I had retired from politics, I did not issue a political programme to the people, and the committee managing the affairs of the Liberal Party could not have made up for the lack of my personality. But despite the fact that I was absent from the electoral struggle, despite the fact that I did not participate therein actively and directly, by making speeches and going to the different provinces to expound my views, don't you think that the approval of my policy, which was known to the people before my retirement from politics, is more worthy of attention, as it was made under those conditions of my personal non-participation in the electoral struggle?

"The Deputy from Patras said—and I think I must answer that, for I cannot answer all—he said that circumstances which presented themselves after the elections were unexpected."

GOUNARIS: "I said that our policy was a policy adapting itself to circumstances."

VENIZELOS: "But if the Greek people said they had confidence in the leader of the Liberal Party, they knew his policy in its general lines, both the foreign and internal policy, for the carrying out of which they were entrusting to him the government of the State, and don't you think that this included in advance exactly the



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verdict that the dominating word must belong to me and not to you, who have not been approved by the people?"

GOUNARIS: "Did that preclude a possible disagreement with the opinion of the people at the moment when a concrete circumstance presented itself?"

VENIZELOS: "Don't you think that our régime would be made like a rag if, while a world-wide struggle was being waged and while the participation in some way or the non-participation of Greece was being decided, you, Honorable Deputy from Patras, advised the Crown the first time to turn away the man chosen by the majority, in order that it might make an appeal to the people and thus spend five and a half months in vain; and again, after the verdict of the people, if all you who constitute the present Government, should again advise the Crown not to pay attention to this verdict of the people, but to make a new so-called appeal to the people, so that another five or six months might again be gained, or rather lost, in order that, perhaps, it might happen that the war would come to an end before we should decide whether we should participate in it or not? Don't you think, I say, that in this manner our Constitution becomes a rag, or do you think this to be a correct application of our Constitution?"

GOUNARIS: "Surely."

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VENIZELOS: "I greatly regret that we so radically disagree upon this very important point.

"But the Deputy from Corfu and the Deputy from Attica have spoken also of the concessions that I was disposed to make to Bulgaria in January, 1915, in order to obtain her co-operation, too, in the struggle against the Turkish State. In the first place, I have a duty to remark to both of them that it is not permitted that they should not have an exact knowledge of what I proposed then, since I had the forethought to formulate my propositions in official documents, which were even published. I do not believe, then, since they had my Memoranda before them, that it was permitted to them to get their information from the newspapers, which inaccurately wrote that I had proposed the cession of the whole of Eastern Macedonia.

"The question was only about the three districts, Drama, Cavalla, and Shari-Sambant; in other words, it was a question of a territory of about 2,000 square kilometers. But under what conditions and under what presuppositions was the cession of these localities to Bulgaria proposed? I proposed, out of the territory of Eastern Macedonia, the cession of those three districts, about 2,000 square kilometers in area, under the following conditions and presuppositions: In the first place, that the districts of Doiran and Gevghehi should be given to us, hav-

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ing an area of 1,000 or 1,200 square kilometers, that is, an area about the half of what was to be ceded by us in Eastern Macedonia and which from the point of view of wealth was certainly of a much less value, but which was very valuable from a strategical point of view.

“Those were the counter-concessions which I was asking for in the Balkan Peninsula. But, furthermore, our concessions to Bulgaria were offered, not merely for the purpose of buying Bulgaria’s neutrality, but for her active co-operation against Turkey, so that by Bulgaria’s attack from the side of Thrace and of ours from Asia Minor, the destruction of the Turkish State might be sooner accomplished. And, furthermore, the concession of the 2,000 square kilometers on our part was offered under the condition that the Triple Entente Powers should recognize that the concessions they had promised to us, very vast territorial concessions, should have the extent which I had outlined in my second memorandum to the King. I have the right to claim that your understandings as to the extent of the concessions were formed much later, after my resignation from office. You say that they were made before Italy’s entrance into the war, but I am convinced that they were made at the time the negotiations of the Entente with Italy for her participation in the war were already much advanced. And if Italy had not yet abandoned neutrality, you can-

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not claim that her abandonment of neutrality was made without previous negotiations which, it is natural, must have lasted for two or three months. I further add that the extent of the concessions could not have been any more the same as those I offered while the government under me was in power."

GOUNARIS: "It has been stated that it was the same."

VENIZELOS: "Because you were to co-operate with the Entente at a later stage of the struggle, and only with our fleet, not even with one army division."

GOUNARIS: "The statement was made before we had proceeded to any proposition. It had been asked that a more general proposition than that should be made to us. And before any step was made on our part this statement was made, to be used as a basis and as a starting point. In other words, the propositions made to us were the same."

VENIZELOS: "If the propositions which were made to you much later, when certainly the negotiations with Italy were begun, if the propositions including the Vilaet of Aidin. . . ."

GOUNARIS: "And the Vilaet. . . ."

VENIZELOS: "If you want to find out what probably would be the extent of the cession of Smyrna with a substantial part of its hinterland, of which you speak, you must have in view the fact that to

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this hinterland naturally belong both the rivers Hermos and Maeandros, the valleys of which extend to a distance of 275 kilometers into the interior of Asia Minor."

### **Not a Policy of Concessions, But One of Expansion.**

"In trying to obtain the consent of the Crown to definite concessions which were deeply affecting the national soul, I was doing so under definite presuppositions, the most important of which was that that painful sacrifice would be redeemed by very vast concessions to us in Asia Minor. You may claim that they might not have been obtained, but you cannot judge my policy upon this point, but only by the extent which I was giving to the counter-concessions in Asia Minor, and which I was asking as a necessary presupposition of concessions on our part to Bulgaria. Neither can you deny that the concessions on the part of the Powers in Asia Minor would have taken, under my tenure of office, a much greater extent, when I, in order to obtain the extension of these concessions, I was disposed to make concessions in Eastern Macedonia, in favor of Bulgaria, to the end that her co-operation might be obtained in the struggle on the side of the Allies.

"But besides that, in exchange for those concessions, I was asking for the appointment of an in-



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ternational commission, which would have proceeded to the exchange of the populations after the demarcation of the definite frontiers of the two states, Greece and Bulgaria, and to the buying by Bulgaria of the properties of all those who lived in the territories ceded to Bulgaria and who wished to move to New Greece, to the great Greece, which was about to be created through my policy, which was not followed by you.

“I think, gentlemen, that when you come to speak of the concessions which I was disposed to make to Bulgaria, it is incumbent upon you, out of respect to the audience and to Parliament, even if you consider it as a society of prominent men, that you have the obligation to state the facts as they took place. It is not permitted to the Deputy from Corfu to say that since we were disposed to cede Cavalla, Drama and Shari-Sambant one must be blind not to see that Bulgaria, taking these territories and also taking from Serbia all the Serbian possessions in Macedonia, would have again become exceedingly strong and dangerous to us. For Bulgaria was not to take from Serbia anything except the so-called undisputed zone, which was distinctly agreed upon by the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, concluded before the war, to be given to Bulgaria. The undisputed zone had an area of about 10,000 square kilometers. If to that area you add the 2,000 square kilometers which we were to cede in Eastern Macedonia,

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and if you add to this number 14,000 square kilometers which Bulgaria was to get in Thrace by the line Aenos-Medea, you will find that Bulgaria was to be increased by about 25,000 square kilometers, that is, to have a total area of 140,000 square kilometers. And in what way can you maintain that such a Bulgaria would be dangerous to Greece, which by her extension in Asia Minor was to have a total area of 250,000 square kilometers?

“I have finished with the Deputy from Corfu. I now come back to my fellow countryman, the Minister of Justice. He accused me of lack of sincerity on the ground that, in receiving the Government when they appeared before Parliament I didn't have the courage to tell them that I had no confidence in them. According to him, I ought to have stated this, so that the Government might have known what they ought to do.

“He almost accuses me of having dragged the Government into an error and intimates that, consequently, the responsibility is mine for having made them remain in power for so many days. I remember well that on the first day of the appearance of the Government before Parliament I came and spoke, really without taking much of the Parliament's time, but I spoke, and very clearly stated my position and explained why I was going to co-operate with the Government. I suppose that by what I said then I expressed

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everything else but confidence in the policy of the Government, which I considered as disastrous to Greece. The Government had a right, when they heard this from the man who had the vote of Parliament expressed in his favor, the Government had a right to ask for a vote of confidence. But the Government correctly judged that they obtained our co-operation only for the sake of facilitating circumstances and not out of our confidence in them. If there is anybody to blame, it is not I. For I did not conceal my opinion of the policy of the Government.

“But my fellow-countryman wanted also to accuse me of being anti-constitutional or anti-parliamentary, on the ground that I wanted to throw the responsibility upon the King. I have explained myself clearly on this point and would not have insisted further, but the matter is so serious that it will not be necessary for me to repeat that the responsibility for what has been done was incarnated then—in February—in the Deputy from Patras, and to-day in yourselves. Neither Parliament or anybody else, but you, are responsible for the situation, because when you were summoned by the King, twenty days ago, you did not tell him that you did not consider yourselves as being required to assume the Government of the country, in accordance with the spirit of the parliamentary régime, and that he ought not to entrust you with the Government,

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when on the previous day the majority of Parliament had expressed confidence to the Liberal Government. If you had thus stated your opinions then, the sovereign, by necessity, would have turned to the leader of the Liberal Party. If matters did not follow this course, which in my opinion was the right one, those are responsible who gave such advice to the King."

RALLIS: "I am glad for the explanation you have given, for I think it is different."

VENIZELOS: "No, it is not different, and I will answer the other Deputy who told me that I spoke disrespectfully of the Crown, and I will say that I spoke very clearly. In answering that Deputy who interposed the King's name in the discussion, I said that I knew the King was a distinguished general, but you will allow me to remark that by our Constitution the opportunity has never been offered the King of the responsible exercise of the executive power, so that he might acquire the necessary experience for exercising responsible authority."

RALLIS: "The meaning you have given is entirely opposite to the responsibility which the Government has in being present here."

VENIZELOS: "Why?"

RALLIS: "Because you attribute the present condition and its consequences to the King's lack of parliamentary experience."

VENIZELOS: "I answered the Deputy who—"



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RALLIS: "You contradict yourself, and while I congratulated you when you held us responsible for what is being done now and will be done in the future, you limit now the responsibility, for it seems that we assume it only because the King, owing to his parliamentary inexperience, cannot exercise his prerogatives the way he ought to."

VENIZELOS: "I must convince you, for, otherwise, I shall be compelled to doubt whether you follow me when I speak; I must convince you that you are in error. The King's name was brought into the discussion through an interruption by which I was asked whether my policy were better than the King's, and whether the King does not wish what is good for Greece. And I said, in answer to those questions: 'We all wish what is good for Greece, the question is, who thinks better.' I do not want you to appeal to the King's opinion, inasmuch as this is also anti-parliamentary.

"But unfortunately I forgot all about certain notes that I have here for the Deputy from Corfu, and I am compelled, temporarily, to leave my fellow-countryman in order to complete, in the meantime, my answer to the Deputy from Corfu.

"The Deputy from Corfu said that I again invoked the Treaty with Serbia. I did not invoke the treaty with Serbia to-night, nor did I mention it in the speech which I made on the first appearance of the present Government before Parlia-



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ment. I told you: 'Suppose that we have no treaty at all with Serbia; let us examine what it is to our interest to do.' But I cannot leave unanswered the inaccuracy which you fell into. You asked, since I knew that the treaty with Serbia was obligatory, why did I refuse in January, 1915, to come to the aid of Serbia? This is not exact, for since the first day that the European War broke out I came to an understanding with Serbia as to what the aid would be, which with the treaty carried out in good faith, we could render Serbia. And I said that it was impossible for us to undertake a campaign up to the Danube, for we had the Bulgarians, who would have attacked us from the northern flanks and we should have both been destroyed. This, far from constituting a refusal to carry out the obligations of alliance, does constitute their carrying out in the common interest."

THEOTOKIS: "That is what we say ourselves to-day."

VENIZELOS: "I have also a duty to remind you of what I told Parliament at another time, in answering an interruption, that it was not correct that Serbia, under corresponding circumstances, had refused her aid to us. I do not need to come back to this subject, for what I said is still fresh in your memory. But you tell me that I also recognized the fact that we had an obligation to aid Serbia, only if she disposed of 150,000 soldiers

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in the war against Bulgaria, and that these 150,000 men were lacking, because the reinforcements asked for to make up for this number were not sent on time by the Entente Powers. But if you want to talk about this matter, I will tell you that we really asked whether 150,000 of Anglo-French soldiers would be given us and they promised that they would be given, but we stated immediately that we did not accept the proposition for the time being. It must be noted, furthermore, that Serbia opposed Bulgaria with 120,000 men, so that only 30,000 men were lacking to carry out the obligation of alliance. But I should not have spoken of this at all, if I did not have to protest strongly against you and to express my astonishment that a statesman of your experience and standing could have taken the floor and accused me of having caused the landing of the Anglo-French Army in Salonica. I had occasion, at another time, to state to Parliament under what circumstances the landing of the Anglo-French forces in Salonica was made, and I have even read to Parliament the official correspondence concerning this matter, and it has been proved by that correspondence that the landing of the Anglo-French forces in Salonica was made entirely independently of our previous question to the Powers whether they were disposed to send a force of 150,000 men to co-operate with the Greek Army against the Bulgarians.

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### **The Greek Army Would Have Invaded Bulgaria.**

“But the Deputy from Corfu is asking me: ‘Did they come, at least, those 150,000 men, so that you might have had them as reinforcements in case you participated in the war?’ Here again you will notice the same method of attacking me. While the policy proposed by me has not been allowed to be carried out, through the intervention of the gentlemen constituting the Government, still this accusation is directed against me. But why, since my policy has not been allowed to be carried out and the Powers had no obligation to send us the 150,000 men, why do you blame me because that force has not come yet? But the Deputy from Corfu says: ‘Do you see what we should have suffered, if with the delay of the arrival of the reinforcements on the part of the Allies we should have gone into the war?’ The Deputy from Corfu has a right to say that; I assure him, however, that the only danger we should have run was that we might be quite far from Sofia, if the Bulgarians were attacking the Serbians with equal forces. (Great applause.)

“And if Bulgaria had directed against us a considerable part of her forces, then we should have had the Serbians delivered and relieved to a great extent from Bulgarian pressure and therefore able more effectively to face the attack from the north; and on our front it was not possible that

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we should have had to face Bulgarian forces superior or even equal to the Greek forces, considering the necessity that Bulgaria was under to hold her frontiers toward Roumania, and the necessity that she had to dispose toward her Serbian frontier, even for defensive purposes, a part of her army.

“Surely, by trying, the way you have been trying for such a long time, to inspire disappointment in the soul of the Greek people, by trying to destroy, if possible, the morale both of the people and the army, surely you can tell me to-day that the Greek Army could not have faced the Bulgarian Army. But I have the right to claim, with conviction, that but for your intervention, if things had been carried out the way I had them planned, if we had had a common course in our foreign affairs, as in 1912, even with the internal protests and with your fears, if we had not shaken the national soul, if we had had, as we should have had, a message from the victorious King to the Greek Army exhorting it to new struggles, unfortunately unavoidable, surely, to say the least, I claim that we should have had a right to look with confidence to the issue of a struggle in which we were to meet equal Bulgarian forces. And even numerically superior Bulgarian forces could have been defeated by the Greek Army, which only two years before had defeated the Bulgarian Army on the field of battle



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and had pushed it up to the old Bulgarian frontier. But you cannot dispute the fact that the Greek Army would have at least conducted the war victoriously under the same conditions, that is, if it had to face forces that were numerically its equal. (Applause.) And when you have in view, Mr. Deputy from Corfu, that the information given to us that the campaign against Serbia was to be undertaken with 800,000, with 600,000 or at least with 500,000 men, when you have it proved by facts that the information was incorrect and that other information which we had from other capitals, also directly interested and being in a position to know the facts very well, did not agree with that; when you have all these things in view and when you know that the Austro-German Army which attacked Serbia was not superior to the Serbian Army which it had to face, then don't you think it is a reckless thing for you to come and take the floor and assure the people and Parliament that your intervention for the purpose of preventing the carrying out of our policy has saved Greece from disaster to-day, for you do not care for the future?

### **The Armed Neutrality.**

"The Honorable Deputy from Corfu said that there are dangers, but the only way to avoid them is by armed neutrality. He expressed to you another opinion, that by armed neutrality we can



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succeed to-day in avoiding the war. If what you are striving for to-day is merely avoiding war with Bulgaria, there is no doubt that this is being obtained, most probably through your policy. I do not say that it is absolutely sure; I do not say that Bulgaria, after crushing Serbia, may not attack us later on. I do not assure this, but I take it as possible that Bulgaria, being tired of the war and perhaps restrained from elsewhere, will not attack us to-day. But what shall be your achievement? Is it worth while to have the Greek people mobilized for as many months as shall be necessary for the affairs of war in the Balkans to come to an end—for I do not suppose that you yourselves believe what is being written in the newspapers, that the Balkan struggle will come to an end within fifteen days—we shall be mobilized as long as the Bulgarians are, wasting the finances of the State and Country, to obtain what? To see that Bulgaria may not attack us to-day, while we shall be standing, rendering military honors and presenting arms to Bulgaria, who will be growing at the expense of our ally and therefore at our expense! (Applause.)

“The Honorable Deputy from Corfu told you that he was proud because, having been called to power, he also contributed to the non-carrying out of my policy. I certainly believe that of all his honorable colleagues who constitute the Government the Honorable Deputy from Corfu is the

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most justified in being proud, because, without expecting it, through the development of our affairs, he came to see, after so many years, that the policy which he advocated for so long has obtained an application, if not by the disposition of the Government, at least in practical results. The Honorable Deputy from Corfu, disregarding the geographical position of Greece and the whole history of Greece since the period of our national independence, and the whole political and diplomatic tradition of Greece, has always thought that Greece could turn her views from the Mediterranean Powers to the Central Empires. And when, after the beginning of the European War, we happened to meet at a formal occasion and I asked him: 'Do you see now that if we had been allied with Germany at the beginning of the war, we should have seen all our maritime towns, including the capital, destroyed, that we should have seen our merchant marine wiped from the face of the earth, that we should have run the danger of dying of hunger by the blockade of our coasts?' The Deputy from Corfu could offer me no answer when I asked him all these things. But to-day he is glad that he succeeds, without suffering all that I have mentioned, not, I repeat, by the intention of the Government, but through the results, as I explained from this floor, in approaching that policy. The Honorable Deputy from Corfu expects salvation from the Central Euro-

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pean Powers, and I tell him that, not only can Greece not grow larger, but she cannot even live in her present condition, if she is in opposition to the Powers dominating the sea."

RALLIS: "We didn't think of such a thing."

VENIZELOS: "I made the distinction about the Government. I know that the Government as a whole does not favor a pro-german policy—"

RALLIS: "Nobody——"

### **Germany Bound to Be Defeated.**

VENIZELOS: "Please do not act as an attorney for the others. I am explaining the psychology of the Deputy from Corfu, and I claim that your policy, without your wishing to render it pro-german, because you consider it useful to Greece, is unfortunately, nevertheless, exclusively serving the interests of the Central European Powers.

"But the Honorable Deputy from Corfu said also another thing: Don't you see, he says, that by this policy, that by armed neutrality, even if, as I say myself, we exhaust the country financially, we shall at least succeed in avoiding war to-day? You are not satisfied with that, but you think of to-morrow and of the day after; and is it the business of politicians to think of to-morrow or of the day after?"

THEOTOKIS: "Did I say that?"

VENIZELOS: "Yes. Here is what you said, and I will ask you to pay attention to it when you

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correct the proofs of your speech: 'Nobody can foresee the future.' "

THEOTOKIS: "I said that, and I maintain it. Didn't you say yourself, a little while ago, that nobody can foresee the results of the war? Then what you said is right and what I say is not right?"

VENIZELOS: "Of which war did I say that it is impossible for me to foresee the results?"

THEOTOKIS: "Of the European War."

VENIZELOS: "I said some days ago that nobody can clearly foresee to-day what the final issue will be of the great struggle that is being waged between the two great combinations. But, in my opinion, taking into consideration the fact that Germany did not win a victory in the beginning, when the allies were not sufficiently prepared to face such a struggle, there can be only an issue favorable to the allies. How does that justify you in saying that one cannot foresee the future? Because I said that one cannot foresee the results of the entire war in the whole theatre upon which it is being waged, do you think that you are justified in saying that you are satisfied to save the present day by avoiding the war, while suffering the consequences of a general mobilization that you have?"

THEOTOKIS: "You attribute to me words and opinions which I did not utter."

VENIZELOS: "You did utter them."

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THEOTOKIS: "No."

VENIZELOS: "You did, and I have a right to tell you . . ."

THEOTOKIS: "You have no right at all."

VENIZELOS: ". . . That it was not permitted to you to say that we should be content to save the present, by avoiding the war, and as for the future, nobody can foresee it."

THEOTOKIS: "I said that we were saving Greece."

VENIZELOS: "I have a right to tell you that the man who, in such critical circumstances, cannot foresee the future has no right to accept the responsibilities of power. (Great applause.) You cannot, in the midst of a world-wide crisis, in which the destinies of all nations are being decided, and especially those of the Greek Nation, not only those of the State, but of the whole Nation, you cannot, at such a moment, come to tell Parliament that you are content with avoiding an unavoidable war—for nobody denied that the war with Bulgaria is inevitable—that you are content to avoid the war to-day, because you are not obliged to foresee the morrow."

THEOTOKIS: "You say all these things, not I."

VENIZELOS: "When, by your policy, you help create a massive Bulgaria near our frontiers—"

THEOTOKIS: "Did I say what was to be established? I did not say 'massive.'"

VENIZELOS: "I say that myself."



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THEOTOKIS: "According to your opinions. According to mine, Bulgaria will not become very massive. There is the difference."

VENIZELOS: "I hope, Mr. Deputy from Corfu, that facts may prove that I am mistaken in my previsions and that you see correctly. But I have the right to tell you that you shut your eyes to-day, if you assert that, if Serbia is perchance crushed to-day and Bulgaria occupies the greater part of the Serbian State, it will be easy, no matter what the final issue of the European War may be, to remove Bulgaria from those parts which she will have occupied without attaining her persistent territorial claims. Do you believe that after the end of the European War, whatever it may be, the peoples of the European Powers which participate in this great and exhaustive struggle will permit the signing of the treaty of peace to be marked by the beginning of a new war against Bulgaria in order to compel her to withdraw her armies from those parts which she claims?"

THEOTOKIS: "There will not be such a necessity."

VENIZELOS: "And I tell you that such an action will not be possible, and I tell you again that by following such a policy you only secure this: the establishment of a massive Bulgaria which, before we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of our national independence, will attack us, for we

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shall be weaker from a military standpoint and also destitute of friends and allies."

"You don't know, perhaps, Mr. Deputy from Corfu, that the mere fact of the invasion of Macedonia by the Bulgarian Army brings about, as a result, the desertion to Bulgaria of tens of thousands from the Serbian Army. So that you have, even during the war, a military strengthening of Bulgaria, because you have permitted her to attack Serbia unimpeded. I believe I have exhausted all the points of disagreement between myself and the Honorable Deputy from Corfu.

"And as to the Deputy from Attica, he had then his policy, which he did not expound, it is true, at the beginning of the first war, out of a sense of patriotism, but which he expounded on the eve of the second war. Then, too, he wanted a policy of armed neutrality; then, too, you remember when I asked him what we ought to do, he answered me: 'Stay and wait for the opportune moment to intervene.' And you remember what I told him. What meaning then would it have for us to remain mobilized and watching, not for months, according to our old conceptions, but even for two or three days, without rushing into the war, when we should have had the Bulgarian occupation of Salonica preceding our own occupation? How do you expect me, then, not to feel a great disappointment to-day, when I see that in the ranks of the Government the same concep-

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tions still prevail, which prevailed on the eve of the first war against Turkey and on the eve of the second war, that against Bulgaria? And these conceptions are not only the conceptions of my honorable fellow-countryman, they are unfortunately the conceptions of the old political world of Greece, at least of that part that is still alive—for certainly I must exclude the figure of the most prominent, that of the late Tricoupis—this policy, I say, is the policy of the old world of Greece which is still living and participating in politics. It is the policy of splendid isolation, under which we ought to have no friends or allies, we ought to have only enemies! If, gentlemen, you were in the Government at that time, too, I have no doubt that you would not have dared to proceed to an alliance with Bulgaria, that you would not have dared to proceed, in alliance, to a war with Turkey, for you would have feared the possible war with Bulgaria, and by not daring to do these things, you would have had Greece still confined to the frontiers as they existed before 1912, while you would have had the Slavic States of the Balkan Peninsula, I repeat that, extending their territories to the Greek frontiers.

### **From Nestos to Maeandros.**

“And thus, gentlemen, the opportunity is offered me to ascertain the psychology and the whole political ideology of the men constituting

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the present Government, who also blamed me then, because, having confidence in the power of the Greek Army, I dared participate in the conflict against Turkey without any previous agreement about the distribution. These men who blamed me then have the courage even to-day to blame me from this tribune! They are, of course, the same men who do not dare to foresee that Greece, which so strangely, according to their conceptions, has reached Nestos, may even extend to the Maritsa on one hand and to the Hermos and the Maeandros on the other. These, of course, are opinions, and they are worthy of respect, like any opinion expressed in good faith. But I may be permitted to say that when these opinions were put to the test of reality, and when the results obtained up to now are such as they present themselves, we must believe that that man shuts his own eyes who still insists that we ought not to have made the war of 1912 with such allies, because after the war with Turkey another war would come, that is, with Bulgaria, and after that, perhaps, still another with Bulgaria!

"But, gentlemen, did you ever discover any method by which Greece with the frontiers of 1912, Greece that was every day kicked and slapped in the face, could by any internal reformation create such a military force as to be able to face alone, without an alliance with the neighboring peoples, a war against Turkey and a war



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against Bulgaria and a war against Serbia, so that she might be able to settle by herself the Greek and the national questions with the Turkish Empire? Or do you share, perhaps, the opinion of those men who after the first and second war were weeping over the calamity suffered by Greece, which made two wars without obtaining anything except the weakening of Hellenism in Turkey? For even that was said, gentlemen, that Hellenism in Turkey was weakened, which Hellenism, according to that theory, and especially after the advent of the régime of the Young Turks, could regenerate the Ottoman Empire under a new Greek form and create for us a new evolution similar to the Byzantine Period. If you had expressed such theories you would have been more justified than when you assert to-day, that we ought not to conclude alliances and not to make wars, because we shall have complications.

“If you should have told me that this State could be indifferent to its national views and obligations and that it could be possible for it, by entirely abandoning all these things, to live and to live as a self-sustaining state, while limited within its old frontiers, if you had said this, I should still understand you. But as long as you don’t say such things, as long as you believe that the development of the State—so that its frontiers may coincide, as far as possible, with the limits of its



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national preponderance—is necessary, not merely for moral and sentimental reasons, but also for political and financial reasons, you will allow me to consider your policy as incomprehensible, when you dare even to-day, after the results obtained, to blame me for having co-operated in alliance with Bulgaria and Serbia in order that Greece might extend her frontiers to the Nestos. But difficulties arise to-day, and it is possible that these difficulties would not have been created if our frontiers were not extended up to there; and it is possible, if our frontiers are extended still further, that we may have more difficulties, for the larger the interests of a state are, the more is it natural that they should affect the interests of other peoples and cause friction; and you blame me because, having extended the frontiers of Greece, I am the cause of all these difficulties. Then, you have a policy that is for a small Greece, let me call it that; and in such a case let us ask the neighboring peoples what they want us to give them, so that they may sign a release, and let us confine ourselves to the rest of the state, after that release, so that we may live within that small bit of a state without any troubles!

“And you will allow me, gentlemen, to tell you again that we are in the presence of a phenomenon, manifestations of which have been made repeatedly in this chamber within the last five years. We have the old world of Greece, repre-

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sented by the new Government. We have the new world, the post-revolutionary, represented by the Liberal Party. The old ideology, represented by the present Government, is the one which thought that Greece could not raise an army of more than 60,000 men, is the one which thought that Greece ought not to enter into alliances with anybody for the realization of her national claims, is the one which had unlimited and, at the same time, uncertain and nebulous views of the national claims, that it might have real preparation in inverse proportion to the size of its claims. We did not know then how far our national claims could be extended. We did extend them often so much that those statesmen who were content that our national frontiers should extend up to Crussovo were considered as abandoning the rights of Greece. Among the members of the present Government is that statesman who was accused of abandoning the rights of Greece, because he took care, poor man, in the arrangement and in his conception of the Macedonian affairs, to leave out of the other two Vilacts, the Vilaet of Cossovo. It is, therefore, natural to-day, also, when Greece faces questions similar to those of 1912, that we should find ourselves at the two opposite poles of political conceptions. You now, as then, do not wish a war with allies. You say again to-day: 'Let this cup pass away from me.' And when I tell you to-day that you cannot permanently avoid

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drinking out of this cup, but only temporarily, and that you shall have to drink out of it to the last drop, you tell us: 'You are to blame, you who have led us up to the Nestos.' (Applause.) And don't you think, gentlemen, that the New Greece has a right to say to the old Greece: 'Gentlemen, again before difficulties so great and so complicated, you have the obligation to step aside and to give place to the New Greece, which has the courage of soul to face the new circumstances?'

### **The Cession of Cyprus.**

"And I seize this opportunity, gentlemen, to say from this official tribune things which have not been told yet, a fact which leaves, perhaps, in the soul of the Greek people certain doubts as to what we could obtain by daring and by following the dictates of our obligations of alliance and of our elementary national interests. For I do not wish to leave the public opinion in error as to the greatness of those things which we could have obtained by daring. It has been left to be believed that our only profits out of a possible participation in the conflict would be the cession of Cyprus. It must be noted that Cyprus is a trifle larger than my own country, and that it has a population of 235,000 Greeks and a total population of 285,000 inhabitants. And with all that, unfortunately, mention has been made of it in the

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press as something of a very small importance. By a large part of the press no emotion has been manifested over it."

RALLIS: "What is being published in the press cannot be repeated, to be made use of as arguments."

VENIZELOS: "But, gentlemen, we were not only to acquire a truly Greek population of 235,000 souls, an educated population, which surely, owing to the long English occupation, lasting for the last 37 years, is on a level of intelligence not lower than the average level of the whole of Greece."

RALLIS: "It is superior."

VENIZELOS: "I am glad that you have such an opinion, and that is what I intended myself to say, but I was afraid that I might hear some protests."

RALLIS: "These opinions of Cyprus are laid much deeper in our souls."

VENIZELOS: "I might be permitted to remark that we should have received a people used to good government for a long time, which would have given us an excellent personnel of administration. But it is not the question of Cyprus alone. Cyprus was offered to us independently of the issue of the European war, in exchange for our participation in the conflict."

RALLIS: "When was it offered?"

VENIZELOS: "It is now offered to you. The

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Cyprus matter goes back to an older period. It goes back to the period of 1913, and it came in the last form at the moment when you had the honor also to be one of the Government.

"I have nothing more to say. I am content with this. I repeat that Cyprus was offered to you in exchange for our participation in the conflict, independently of the possible issue. But if the issue of the struggle were successful, the concessions in Asia Minor remained always valid. And no matter how much the Deputy from Patras tried to minimize the importance of those concessions, I have a duty to tell you that the Vileta of Aidin alone is larger in area than the old Greece, the one before the war of 1912, and from the point of view of wealth and production it is superior. But this would not have been all that we should have obtained by participating in the war, if its issue were in accordance with our desires. We had other things to obtain, also of great importance. We had to obtain the pushing of Bulgaria back from the Aegean Sea and her restriction beyond the line of Rhodope.

"I know, gentlemen, that on this point there was no official communication made to you. But I have a right to tell you about it, because the negotiations were begun during the time I was in the Government, which fact enabled me to follow, even after my retirement, the result of that action; to tell you that the result of that



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action reached the point where the Powers agreed that the claims formulated by me were just, although they did not care to proceed to new propositions to the Greek Government, lest they might meet with new failures, but waited for the proposition to come from the Greek Government.

“My information on this matter is of an official character, and you must note, gentlemen, that the removal of Bulgaria from the Aegean Sea at this moment has a much greater value than the one we could ascribe to it down to the year 1912 and until the beginning of the present war, for the effectiveness of the action of the submarine fleet has been proved to be such that Bulgaria, continuing to have three ports on the Aegean Sea—that is, Porto Lago, Macre and Dedeagatch—will have three bases from which only ten submarines, in case of war with us, could render most difficult and most dangerous and very slow the concentration of the Greek army, especially the part coming from the islands, which, outside of Cyprus, have a population of 1,300,000, and in case of mobilization would have to furnish a military force of 130,000.

“I have further to remark that our participation in the conflict and its successful issue would have had as a result the cession to us on the part of Serbia of the salient Doiran-Gevgheli, through the declaration of Serbia that she gave up all claims upon the Strumnitza Valley, which according to

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the treaty of 1913 was included in the zone of Serbian national influence. Serbia, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs knows, made a declaration that in the future she waived all claims to and that she no longer cared for the Strumnitza Valley, so that if the issue of the war were successful we should have pushed Bulgaria back to her old frontiers, by occupying the whole of Bulgarian Thrace and the Strumnitza Valley, and by transferring our frontiers from the Beles Mountains to the Males Mountains. Every one of you understands what importance this would have for the future formation of the Greek Kingdom.

“And I don’t think, gentlemen, that through your present policy we are merely throwing away all these probable claims of Greece for the sake of not conducting at this time an inevitable war with Bulgaria. We do not throw them away merely for the present, but we render impossible even in the future such a realization of our national dreams.

“Through your policy, we not only do not expect to frustrate in general all of Bulgaria’s dreams of leadership in the Balkans, and to restrict her there, where her national mass gives her a right to live with the rest of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula; we not only render impossible at the present time the final termination of the struggle which, as I said at another time, has been waged between us and Bulgaria for the

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last thirteen centuries, but through your policy, which, without your wishing it, serves the interests of the other European combination, we run the risk of making possible even after the war the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire. I will be permitted to say that that man is blind who does not see now what is going to happen if the Ottoman Empire emerges from this war unimpaired. There will be the final and total extermination of Hellenism, which began in April, 1914. Our whole National structure in the Ottoman Empire, which is not merely the creation of the last centuries, but which is indigenous, antedating the Ottoman conquest by a thousand years—all that structure is to be wiped out entirely, and all those millions of the Greek race are to be sent here into free Greece. What took place up to the European war will convince you what fate awaits Hellenism in Turkey if she survives that war.

### **The Proposed Extermination of the Hellenic Race in Asia Minor.**

“And, unfortunately, it is not only the Turkish Government that has a clearly outlined policy for the extermination of the Greek race—a policy sufficiently demonstrated already against another race, the Armenians, and which of course is being postponed to-day that it may be irresistibly

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manifested again after the end of the European war—but there are others, much more powerful than the Turks, and who have interests entirely identical with theirs. And I am asking: When, through this policy of yours, you shall contribute to the making of a larger Bulgaria and to Turkey's proceeding to the extermination of Hellenism and sending to you here millions of refugees, how do you believe that you shall be able to meet the coming Bulgarian danger, which is evident to all those who do not wish to shut their eyes?

“The Honorable Deputy from Corfu told you—and, unfortunately, I am obliged to come back to that matter—he told you that he sees the danger, but that he prefers to avoid the present dangers in order probably to leave it to others to meet the perils of the future. But, gentlemen, is this the policy of a state, a state like Greece, having to face the questions which are met by this unfortunate nation? Is this a policy, to try to avoid a break to-day, a war that is inevitable within a short time, by saying that God may help us to-morrow? What God will help us, when our opponent, the war with whom is inevitable, shall grow more and more powerful, and when we shall remain without allies and without friends; when we shall have to take care of millions of refugees within the Greek territory; when we shall have to provide for all the expenses of a long armed neutrality, toward which you are drifting;



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when we shall have to take care of all these things, together with the necessity of intensifying our military preparations in order to meet the Bulgarian danger? Don't you see that you are preparing a tragic fate for the nation after the end of the war and until the moment when the war with Bulgaria shall begin? Don't you see that on the very day after the close of the war, when the results are such as I imagine them to be, with a Bulgaria overgrown, that Greece will find herself not merely in an inferior position as to Bulgaria, but exactly in the tragic position in which she was after the year 1897, when she was accepting constant slaps in the face and humiliations? Don't you feel that, after the end of the war, when Bulgaria shall grow larger and the equilibrium that has been established by the Treaty of Bucharest shall be upset, don't you feel with what impertinence the Bulgarian consuls at Salonica and at Cavalla will go to our authorities—not merely to the administrative authorities, but also to the judicial authorities—and ask for the release from prison of a Bulgarian, whom one day they will ask to take along with them, because they will threaten you with war, which you will feel that it will be difficult in the future to conduct under conditions favorable to Greece?

“You will tell me that if things do not come out according to my fears, if things come out according to my expectations and wishes—that is, in a



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victory of the Entente Powers—you will tell me that these losses will be lessened. Surely, I do not think there is danger, in such circumstances, of Bulgaria's growing stronger, except in the case, which is not improbable, that Bulgaria, having fought on the one side for a certain period of the war, should turn toward the end and fight for the other side until the end of the war. There is, therefore, this contingency, which is not excluded. But even if you avoid this risk, don't you see that with such conduct on the part of Greece, a victory of the Entente Powers, which would create a strong Serbia, with a Greece the same as the one of to-day, such a victory of the Entente Powers would be equally dangerous for Greece, not because the heroic Serbians were the enemies of the Greeks during so many centuries, but because, after the violation on our part of the obligations of the Treaty of Alliance, it is natural that the Serbians should be disposed to be fiercely inimical to us in the future? And don't you think, gentlemen, that we may broaden the conception that must be given our attention, don't you think that, since nobody disputes what I have repeatedly said from this tribune—that a war with Bulgaria is inevitable, as long as she claims the whole of Greek Macedonia, while we do not mean to sacrifice an inch of its ground, even against concessions elsewhere—since nobody disputes this truth, don't you think that it is not permissible

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for us to allow that war to be conducted after the end of the European war, when, on the basis of your policy—for you must judge the probable results on the basis of your views—when Bulgaria shall be stronger, while you shall be without allies in the Balkan Peninsula? And is it not better to conduct that war to-day, when you may have not only such concessions in case of a successful issue, but when you may by your participation assure the success of the struggle for the Entente in the special war theatre of the Balkans, the only one left where the Central European Powers may obtain some final success, which they have vainly sought on the other fronts for the past fifteen months?

“If, gentlemen, we could remain neutral and avoid war while maintaining our present position and the existing proportion to the neighboring peoples, and against this the view were offered that we should go to war with a probable increase and over-increase of Greece, I should understand the hesitation; I should say surely that this is a conservative policy; that, of course, by the other policy our most daring national dreams are to be realized, but that even by the opposite policy we remain such as we are; that at least we do not become at all inferior to our competitors.

“But is this the case, or is the equilibrium established by the Treaty of Bucharest to be upset, you to remain at the most such as you are,

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while the others grow much stronger ; you to have to face the inevitable war under conditions much more terrible for you, engaging in a duel with the enemy and having, in case of success, merely to seek an increase in the Balkan Peninsula, without the concessions of Cyprus and of Asia Minor—an increase concerning which, you know, the highest European court will be called upon to render its decision at the end of that duel?

Gentlemen, I have finished what I had to say. But I come, for the last time, to tell the present Government once more that they undertake truly the heaviest responsibility toward the nation by coming to govern Greece again, directing her destinies at this most critical period of our national life with old conceptions, with conceptions by the prevalence of which in 1912 Greece would still be within the old frontiers, with conceptions which have been radically condemned not only by the judgment of men, but also by the very force of things.

“It is most natural, gentlemen, considering the conceptions under which the old political world of Greece acted, the world that in the majority occupies the benches of the Government—it is natural, I say, that it can not adapt itself to the new order of things, that it cannot adapt itself to all the great and colossal problems which have arisen since the period when Greece, having ceased to be a small nation, extended her frontiers

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and occupied in the Mediterranean a position exceptionally imposing, but also exceptionally enviable and, therefore, exceptionally dangerous. How do you dare, with these old conceptions, to assume the responsibility of the policy shaped by you, and even to depart from the ancient traditional policy of the old political world of Greece, which knew that it was impossible for Greek affairs to obtain success in opposition to the Powers dominating the sea? How is it possible, I repeat, to-day, having such conceptions, to try to impose them on the country against the repeatedly expressed opinion of the National Representation and against the very accomplishments of the near past, which you did not hesitate, Mr. fellow-countryman, with the sincerity which distinguishes you, to disparage, also this evening, by stating openly that after all you thought it would have been better for us if we had remained within our old frontiers as they were before 1912? But, Mr. fellow-countryman, the lives of individuals and the lives of nations are governed by the same law—the law of constant struggle. And this struggle is still harder for nations than for individuals, because after all the struggle among men is regulated by the internal legislation of states and is restricted by the penal law, by the police and generally by the organized system of a state, which as far as possible protects the weak against the powerful, although it has not yet



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been possible that even that protection be entirely effective, notwithstanding it has a tendency to be so, while still a long way from the ideal. But in the struggle of nations, where there is international law, the pitiful condition of which, both before and especially now during this European war, you well know, you must understand that it is impossible for small nations to live and to make headway and to grow larger without a constant struggle. And I must further say another thing, that this increase and growth of Greece has not only to satisfy moral needs, noble national impulses, to constitute the realization or rather the fulfillment of obligations toward our unredeemed brethren, but that it is also a necessary pre-requisite for this State to remain capable of living. To a certain extent, I should realize, according to the conceptions of this honorable fellow-countryman of mine, that if we were to have Turkey permanently as a neighboring state on the north we might live for many years, especially if we had made up our minds to suffer from time to time humiliations and insults without protesting. But since we have extended our frontiers, and since we have already other Christian nations as our rivals, against which in case of defeat in war, we cannot expect a substantial intervention on the part of foreigners, from the moment that these things became true, gentlemen, the establishment of Greece as a



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State self-sustaining, able to defend itself from the attacks of its enemies, was for her a matter of life or death.

Unfortunately, after our successful wars no time was given us to develop our new territories and to organize the enlarged Greece into a model new State as far as possible, so that the people might gain all the advantages and all the profits that could be gained out of the extension of our frontiers. This really unfortunate people saw as yet only the sacrifices which they had undergone for the widening of the boundaries of the State; they only had the moral satisfaction of having liberated their brethren and the national satisfaction of belonging now to a State larger than before. But from the material point of view, and more strictly from the point of financial interests, the people had not yet succeeded in seeing any profit arising out of this extension of the State. It is natural, therefore, that to-day also we have only to present before their eyes the sacrifices that are again necessary, but sacrifices which are bound,—according to my unalterable conviction, as much as it is possible for such convictions to exist among men on such matters; according to my unalterable conviction and to my conception of things political,—to bring about the creation of a great and powerful Greece, constituting not an extension of the State by conquest, but a natural return to the limits within which Hellen-

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ism has flourished ever since the prehistoric period; to bring about the creation of a Greece great, powerful and wealthy, able to develop a vital industry within her limits; able, owing to the interests she would represent, to conclude commercial conventions with other States under the best possible terms; a Greece able to protect the Greek citizen the world over, to permit him to say 'I am a Greek' with pride, and to know that in every case the State is ready and able to defend him no matter where he is, as great and powerful nations defend their citizens—that he may not endure persecution or suffer for the lack of protection, as the subject of the Greek State is suffering to-day.

“When you have all these things in view, gentlemen, you will understand why I said a little while ago that I am possessed—and not only I myself, but the whole Liberal Party—by a deep sadness; for by your policy you are leading Greece unwillingly, but you are leading her surely, to her ruin; because of necessity you will compel her to conduct a war under the most difficult and unfavorable of conditions, by letting slip such an opportunity as is offered to nations but once in thousands of years—the opportunity of creating a Greece both great and powerful.”  
(Great applause from the floor and the galleries.)

## **PART III**

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### **Venizelos' Direct Appeal to the Greek People**



# AN ADDRESS TO KING CONSTANTINE

## Drawn Up by Venizelos And Adopted by the People of Athens at a Mass-Meeting Held on August 27, 1916

[In the month of August, 1916, a Bulgarian army invaded Eastern Macedonia, which was unprotected by Allied forces, and occupied Fort Eupel, which is the key to that section of Macedonia. The occupation of that fort was made without the least resistance on the part of the Greek army, which had orders from the King's General Staff to hand the fort over to the Bulgarians, together with the guns, ammunition and other war material provided for its defence.

The occupation of Fort Eupel aroused throughout Greece a deep emotion, which changed to indignation when the Bulgarians, contrary to their promises and the official declarations of Germany, continued their advance and occupied Seres, Drama and Cavalla, at the same time seizing a vast quantity of war material, worth many millions of dollars, and taking prisoners about 5,000 Greek troops, which were sent to Germany by way of Sofia.

In the face of these new humiliations, the indignation of the Greek people reached the limit of endurance, and they turned to Venizelos in the hope that by his intervention further dangers and insults might be avoided. Thereupon, Venizelos called the people of Athens to a mass-meeting, on August 27, 1916, and after a speech to an audience of about one hundred thousand people offered the following resolutions, which were carried by acclamation and presented to King Constantine by a committee of 25 citizens:]

"Sire: You are the victim of persons who, to destroy the work of the revolution of which we are to-day celebrating the seventh anniversary, and to re-establish their system of corrupt government, have not hesitated to exploit the respect which the nation owes to the Crown and the love it bears for you, and are ready to imperil the



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work of regeneration achieved by five years of labor and two glorious wars in order to strike at one of those who co-operated in that work. You are the victim of your military advisers, who, taking a narrow military view and anxious to establish a system of absolutism which would make them in effect masters of the country, have convinced you that Germany will emerge victorious from the European war.

"Finally, you are the victim of your natural and human weakness. Accustomed to admire everything German, astounded by this unparalleled military preparation, as by every other German organization, not only have you believed in German victory, but you have desired it. You hoped that after a German victory you would be able to concentrate in your own hands the whole power of government and sweep aside our system of liberty.

"To-day we see the consequences of these blunders. Instead of expanding in Asia Minor, Thrace and Cyprus; of ending forever our quarrels of more than a thousand years with our national enemies; of creating Greece great, powerful and rich, fulfilling our loftiest national dreams, we see the Bulgars invading Greek Macedonia, occupying Seres and towns and forts and making prisoners of detachments of the Greek army there, without our being at war, declared or not declared, with the invader.

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"While we receive them with the irony of friendly assurance, we see them seize our munitions of war, which cost us hundreds of millions and which the General Staff criminally abandoned after our general demobilization. Although our national enemy has mobilized, this war material was left concentrated in towns near the frontier, and so became easy prey of the invading neighbor.

"From the position in which we placed Greece, we see her to-day reduced again to a position to which she was cast down before the revolution. Instead of Greece being respected by friends and redoubtable to foes, we see her to-day pitied by the one and despised, scorned and chastised by the other. Having disregarded the biological conditions of the environment within which alone Greece can, I do not say grow, but even live as a free State, they are driving her to an assured catastrophe.

"To-day's demonstration has been summoned to express the grief of the nation's soul, and to manifest in perfect order the nation's anguish and anger at the misfortunes into which the country has been led, and is still being led, by the present policy. This demonstration seeks to enlighten you and to persuade you that, in spite of perfidious efforts, the nation does not approve what has been done, whatever they may say who surround you; to appeal to your love of the father-

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land to find the strength to break with the evil influences which, as we said, exploit the love of the people for you, and which are dragging you, and with you your royal house and Greece and the nation, to a national catastrophe.

“Elections are due to take place so that the people may have national representation, but these elections alone cannot give a salutary solution of the question now in issue. So long as you permit, Sire, an unworthy use to be made of your name as an enemy of a great political party, what good can come from these elections, which under such conditions do no more than mask an undeclared fratricidal war? How could the Liberal Party carry out its policy should it judge it necessary to do more than observe benevolent neutrality as the Entente Powers rightly ask of us, since the criminal conduct of the General Staff has literally dissolved the army and rendered Greece incapable of fighting; for you must learn that even if your Government were to pronounce for intervention by the Greek army, you would no longer find an army to lead to victory.

“Proclamations of the association calling itself the Pan-Hellenic Association of Reservists, professing their readiness to shed their blood anew at a sign from you, in no way correspond to the reality. These proclamations are made because those who made them have been assured Greece will never depart from the neutrality policy

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adopted, and, above all, the manner in which this policy has been followed has provoked a very grave malady in the national organism.

"We do not say this malady is incurable, but to treat it the forces of the nation must be concentrated, not divided. This union of forces must be carried out at once, for to-morrow may be too late. Leave to others the role of party leader, to which those who exploit your throne would debase you, and boldly face the enemy. By impious and satanic action they have tried, and unhappily with success, to divide the national forces from the union of which alone the nation's soul expects health and the greatness of the Fatherland.

"Collaboration has become difficult to-day. The chief of the Liberal Party has enough abnegation not to raise any personal difficulty in the way of the work of national salvation. Assuredly, temporary governments are not ideal, particularly in circumstances so critical for the nation, but the present Government is to-day a national necessity, and at its head is a wise man, who, in other difficult circumstances, rendered the nation valuable services.

"To this Government the Liberal Party is ready to accord its confidence. Let it be considered a political Government, and do you also accord to it your absolute confidence. Remove far from you, and keep far from you henceforth, all



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those persons who illegally, bit by bit, have usurped all the political power. Let your Government turn the political course of the State definitely toward the Entente Powers by offering them at once that benevolent neutrality which they have so long demanded, and which has been so long promised them.

“Apply yourself at once with your Government, and helped by us all, to revive the national sentiment, weakened by prolonged mobilization, the teaching of the barracks and the poison of the foreign propoganda, so that Greece may once again have an army, so that when the circumstances demand it—and we are sure they will demand it—it will be able to defend her vital interests so far as they may be safeguarded, side by side this time with powerful allies, traditional protectors and benefactors of Greece.

“You will see by to-day’s demonstration that the Liberal Party is not the enemy of the Crown nor the enemy of the Royal House, nor the enemy of yourself. It is only the respectful guardian of free institutions, and will suffer no one to injure them. That is the true interest of the Crown, and only those who are exploiting the Crown seek to persuade you to the contrary. They are your worst enemies.”



## A PROCLAMATION TO THE GREEK PEOPLE

Issued by  
**Venizelos and Admiral Countdouriotes**  
at Canea, Crete, on September 14, 1916

[As a result of the action of the Athens mass-meeting of August 27, 1916, the Zaimis cabinet was compelled to resign from office; but aside from this the King of Greece not only did not comply with the wishes of the People, as expressed in the resolutions adopted at that mass-meeting, but he formed a new cabinet composed of politicians who were openly pro-German and hostile to the Entente Powers. Venizelos, convinced now that there was no more hope of the King and the Greek State's adopting the national policy, was compelled, in concord with Admiral Countdouriotes, the popular hero of the wars of 1912 and 1913, and with several members of his former cabinet, to leave Athens for Crete. The people of that island, as soon as Venizelos with his party landed, proceeded to remove King Constantine's authorities and entrusted Venizelos, together with Admiral Countdouriotes and a third person, to be selected by them, with the formation of a Provisional Government for the salvation of the Fatherland.

Venizelos, having accepted this mandate, issued, with Admiral Countdouriotes, the following proclamation to the Greek People:]

*To the Greek People:—*

The cup of bitterness, of humiliation and disgrace has been filled to overflowing. A policy, the motives of which we do not wish to examine, has in the space of one year and a half produced such national disasters that whoever compares the Greece of to-day with that of one and one-half years ago doubts whether she is the same

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State. The Crown, having listened to suggestions of evil counselors, sought to carry out a personal policy, by which Greece, having deserted her traditional friends, sought to approach her hereditary enemies. And what are the results of this policy over which the nation is weeping to-day? At home we have departed from the Constitution and are in a state of dissolution, while abroad we are isolated and despised. Around us, disregard and derision; amongst us, lack of government and anarchy.

The traditional friends and protectors of Greece are taking measures of security upon her soil, because they consider her already the friend of their enemies. Her century-old enemies are occupying her territories. Having left our allies, the Serbians, to be crushed, we have helped the Bulgarians to accomplish a triumph.

We have prevented the Serbians from crossing Greek territory on their way to Salonica, to defend their country, and indirectly to defend also our own country, and we have opened the way to the Bulgarians, in order to facilitate their triumph. The Greek Army, victorious in 1912 and 1913, runs away now without fighting, and abandons the regions that it liberated with its own blood only three years ago.

The enemy, defeated at that time, now advances arrogantly upon those very same territories, which are delivered to him without defence, by an

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army which surrenders at the same time. Rupel and Cavalla, our forts and our towns, are occupied and the inhabitants are fleeing from the coming invader. Humiliated and an object of pity, the Greek flag is hauled down and the Bulgarian flag is raised instead, while the Greek Army is ordered to stand an impassive spectator of the national crucifixion.

The priests and the teachers and the other prominent Greeks are led away to an unknown fate, while the comitadjis are satisfying their race hatred and their rapacious impulses.

The war material is being delivered into the hands of the Bulgarians. The Greek properties are left to be plundered. Hellenism in Asia Minor continues to be exterminated. A violent degradation and pillage and persecution and dishonor are devastating every Greek home. The Greeks of Eastern and Western Macedonia in great numbers are coming destitute into old Greece, while the Greek Army is being disgraced by being taken to Germany by way of Sofia.

The Bulgarian language is heard in the Greek churches of Macedonia and the Bulgarian flag is floating over the Greek barracks. Bulgarian arrogance advances impertinent upon Greek soil, and the agents of the Germans in Athens are consoling us with the assurance that it will stop at Sarantaporo, by the aid of Germany. In vain from the Greek regions that are occupied come

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the lamentations of the Greeks who flee, who are robbed of their property and who cry out in anguish to the unheeding state: "Where do you abandon us?" In Athens itself there is an organized opposition to any manifestation of national sense of honor and indignation, while those having a patriotic spirit are branded as traitors and Schenck's mercenary agents are preaching the betrayal of the Fatherland. The Bulgarians are destroying our national liberty, while the German admirers in Athens are celebrating also the overthrow of constitutional liberty in the rest of the state. A political derailment, a military disorganization, a financial chaos, a governmental anarchy, a national subjugation and extermination.

Only a year and a half ago Greece, glorious and strong and vigorous, was looking with unshaken self-confidence toward the realization of her most daring national dreams, respected by her friends and dreaded by her enemies. To-day Greece is ragged, paralyzed, decomposed, dying,—an object of pity to her friends and laughed at, despised and humiliated by her enemies. This is the picture of the results of the policy that has been followed. But this is not the time for us to seek to fix the responsibility for the disasters that have been heaped upon us. What is imperative is to try, while there is still time, to save whatever can yet be saved. The surest way to seek



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our salvation would certainly be by the restoration of the broken national unity, in order that this work might be undertaken with the co-operation of all the national forces. But this restoration of the broken national unity could be brought about only in one way : by the immediate return to the policy dictated by our national conscience ; by our trying to free our soil from the invasion of the detested enemy ; by fighting at the side of our allies, the Serbians, and at the side of the Great Powers that are fighting in common with them, three of which Powers are the guarantors of our independence ; by co-operating with those Powers to the end that Europe may not only definitely rid herself of the danger of German supremacy, but also the Balkan Peninsula of the claims of Bulgarian preponderance. We shall be happy if the King decides, even at this last moment, to place himself at the head of the national forces in order that the carrying out of this national policy may be sought in an unbroken national union. But as long as this is not obtained, no other way to salvation has been left but that of a partial action of that section of the nation which believes that, if we do not co-operate with our natural allies in the work of reformation of the Orient which is to ensue after the great European war, the Greek State and the Greek Nation are hastening to their ruin. In accepting, therefore, as by duty bound, but with enthusiasm, the man-



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date entrusted to us by the people, we make an appeal to Pan-Hellenism to help us in the task we are undertaking. Since the State has betrayed its duty, it remains for the Nation to undertake and do the work which, as a matter of duty, belongs to the State. We appeal for the assistance of the whole national force which feels that the further toleration of the disasters and humiliations brought about by the policy that has been carried out up to now would be equivalent to a national death, and we rush into this struggle with full confidence that, in the absence of the State, the Nation, being now called to a general rally, will again accomplish that miracle which is necessary to bring the Nation back upon the course from which it deviated a year and a half ago.

ELEUTHERIOS VENIZELOS  
PAUL COUNDOURIOTES.

Canea, September 14, 1916.

### **The Provisional Government at Work.**

The first result of Mr. Venizelos' Proclamation was that besides Crete, Samos, Mytilene, Chios and Lemnos also immediately joined the revolutionary movement, and the inhabitants of all those islands in public meetings solemnly and enthusiastically placed themselves under the orders of the Provisional Government and pledged their support thereto.

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The Proclamation also had considerable effect upon the Greek army in Macedonia, where the garrisons of Voden and Kozane declared their willingness to co-operate with that part of the Greek army in Salonica which, under the leadership of Colonel Zymbrakakis, disregarding the Greek Government's orders, had already joined the Allied forces, to fight the Bulgarians.

Besides the garrisons mentioned, groups of officers, petty officers and privates from the garrisons of Athens, Corfu and other cities went to Salonica and joined the revolutionists.

And the revolutionary movement has not been confined to the army, but it spread also to the navy, the battleship "Hydra" and a number of destroyers leaving their anchorage at the navy yard with all their officers and crews and going to Salonica, where they reported for orders to the Provisional Government.

Mr. Venizelos, after remaining for only a few days in Crete, where he placed all public services under the control of the Provisional Government, went, together with Admiral Coundouriotis, to Salonica by way of Samos and Mytilene, meeting at both the last mentioned islands with an enthusiastic reception.

At Salonica, Mr. Venizelos' reception on the part of the people and the revolutionary army was equally enthusiastic and he was officially welcomed by the commanders of the military and naval forces of the Allies at that port.

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As soon as he landed at Salonica, Mr. Venizelos completed the Provisional Government by the nomination of General Danglis, so that it consisted now of Mr. Venizelos, Admiral Coundouriotis and General Danglis, a distinguished officer who made an enviable record in the last two wars in which Greece was engaged.

Upon its completion, the Provisional Government appointed a full cabinet and then started with all possible haste to organize an army, which is to drive the Bulgarians out of Greek territory.

The Allies, from the first moment, have shown their willingness to render the Provisional Government every possible assistance, by granting it a loan and supplying the munitions for the new Greek army that is now being raised, independently of the Government at Athens.

At the moment these pages go to press nothing is yet known which would permit one to measure the extent of the activities of the Provisional Government at Salonica, and to foresee their probable results. But Mr. Venizelos' record, both in Crete and at Athens, may be taken as a promise that his great mind and indomitable courage will enable him to get Greece out of her present unfortunate and most dangerous situation.

## **PART IV**

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### **Venizelos' Public Career**





## **VENIZELOS IN CRETE.**

### **His Share in the Work for the Union of the Island With Greece.**

Eleutherios K. Venizelos belongs to one of the most ancient and most prominent families in the island of Crete. He was born in 1864 at Mournies, a small village just outside of the city of Canea, and after attending public school went to college and later on to the National University at Athens, where he studied law and graduated with highest honors.

On his return to Canea, Mr. Venizelos began the practice of law and at the same time took an active interest in local politics. It was not long before the young lawyer began to command public attention through his unusual talents. He was spending long hours in his library, studying politics, law and foreign languages, especially French and English, and his law office gained such a high reputation, in the course of a few years, that it was soon handling the greatest number of important cases before the courts. In the meantime Mr. Venizelos, now in everyday contact with the public, exhibited a wealth of varied knowledge which, coupled with a superior intelligence and a sweet and lovable character, made for him many friends throughout the Island, until he came to be considered an

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exceptional personality and the foremost and strongest political leader.

Mr. Venizelos' reputation as a great orator and a strong political leader being now firmly established in Crete, it quickly spread across the narrow strip of water that separates the island from the mainland of Greece and drew the attention of the political circles of Athens. But to the general Greek public and especially to the European public outside of Greece Mr. Venizelos' name became first known at the period of the Cretan insurrection of 1897.

In the month of January of that year, the Turks of the island, at the instigation and with the co-operation of the Turkish army, massacred a great number of Christians in the cities of Canea and Rethymno, while the Christian quarters in Canea were destroyed by fire. In the face of these Turkish atrocities the Christian population of the island revolted against Turkish authority and proclaimed the union of Crete with Greece.

Venizelos, who happened to be away from Canea at the time, hastened to return immediately and assumed the leadership of the insurrection, the insurgents in the meantime having concentrated at the famous Acroteri, a mountainous village just outside of Canea. Meanwhile public opinion in Greece was thoroughly

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aroused, and through mass-meetings and other manifestations the people compelled the Greek Government to take measures to protect the Christian population of Crete from further destruction. Thus, on January 28, 1897, Prince George of Greece, King Constantines' brother, was sent to Cretan waters with a flotilla of torpedo boats, in order to prevent the transport of fresh Turkish troops to the island, and three days later Colonel Vassos was also sent at the head of two thousand soldiers with orders to occupy the island in the name of the King of Greece.

As soon as this small force under Colonel Vassos was landed, the Great European Powers, being interested in the maintenance of peace in the near East, ordered their admirals commanding the international fleet to land marines and prevent any action on the part of the Greek military force.

The European Powers did not fail to realize, however, that they ought to put a speedy end to the abnormal situation, and at the suggestion of the English Government they decided to grant to Crete a true and complete autonomous government under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey. The Powers communicated this decision to the Greek Government, at the same time advising it that it was absolutely impossible for

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the Powers to recognize the proclaimed union of Crete with Greece and directing Greece to withdraw her military force from the island within six days.

Greece, having failed to comply with this ultimatum, the Powers ordered a blockade of the coast of Crete. But shortly afterwards the Greek Government, of its own accord, recalled Colonel Vassos' little army from Crete to employ it, together with the other Greek forces, in the war with Turkey, which had broken out in the meantime and which, within a few weeks, came to an end with results disastrous for Greece.

The Cretan insurgents were not discouraged by the defeat of the mother country, but established their camp permanently at Acroteri and proceeded to the election of a revolutionary committee under the leadership of Venizelos. The insurgents had implicit faith in Venizelos and obeyed his orders like the most disciplined of soldiers. A nod, a single word from Venizelos, was an order that the men were eager to carry out. Under his leadership the insurgents were ready to face the bullets of the European marines and the guns of the big cruisers anchored in the bay.

One of the many incidents of that period showing Venizelos' firm hold upon the insurgents occurred in connection with the shelling of the

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Greek flag which the Cretan patriots had raised on the top of Acroteri. The foreign admirals had peremptory orders from their governments to bring this flag down, and the Italian admiral, Canevaro, who commanded the international fleet, tried to persuade Venizelos to haul it down.

"Never! Haul it down yourselves," said Venizelos.

"But we shall bombard your camp," Canevaro warned him.

"Do as you please," replied Venizelos; "we shall be ready for you."

Returning to the camp, he reported the conversation to his men.

"We shall never haul down the flag," they declared; "it will stay where it is."

Early the next morning the insurgents took positions from which they could see the international fleet and also the flag. Venizelos went about greeting his men simply: "Good morning, boys. Look out for the flag." The ships of the Powers raised anchor, went out to sea for a convenient distance, and began a furious bombardment—in which the target was not another warship, a fort or a battery, but the solitary flag of a small, weak state.

The shells began to crash around the rocks, but Venizelos' inspiring and encouraging voice



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could always be heard: "Boys, look out for the flag."

After some time a shell hit the flagstaff and left it leaning to one side and ready to fall down. A cry of indignation was heard from a thousand throats, and a thousand men, first among them Venizelos, rushed to the top of the hill to fasten the flagstaff, unmindful of the European shells. The men, realizing how precious Venizelos' life was for the Fatherland, restrained him with difficulty from exposing himself to serious danger, and a young Cretan climbed up the hill and set the flagstaff in its former position, while the bombardment continued more furiously than ever.

But the foreign warships were bound to finish their inglorious task. A few minutes later another shell hit the flagstaff squarely and broke it to splinters, while a torn and blackened rag was all that was left of the former flag.

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One month after the bombardment of the Greek flag at Acroteri by the international fleet, French and English detachments occupied strong positions in front of Acroteri, thus tightening the blockade. The international troops were especially trying to occupy Coutsospyro, a commanding position held by Venizelos and his men. Colonel Egerton, in command of the English

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detachment, sought an interview with the Cretan leader, who promptly consented to meet him in a neutral zone. When Colonel Egerton explained the purpose of the meeting, this was Venizelos' short answer: "Colonel, we won this position with our own blood and we mean to defend it with our blood. Do as you please. We are not afraid of your warships. We have had experience with their shells. You will occupy this position only when we are dead." In the face of this determination of the Cretan leader the English commander gave up the plan of occupying that stronghold of the insurgents.

At the end of June of the same year the Revolutionary Convention assembled at Armenous, in the province of Apocorona, and Mr. Venizelos was elected its president. On August 25th, 1897, Venizelos sent from the camp of the revolutionists to Vice-Admiral Canevaro, the commander of the international forces in Crete, the following communication:

"It is with regret that I am informed that my election as President of the Convention has been attacked by important organs of the European and especially of the English press, which denounce me as being an agent of the National Society.

"I don't know whether that organization, which was one of the principal causes of the

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Greco-Turkish war and of the disasters that have been piled therefrom upon our nation, is still in existence. I only know that my position in the country and my course up to the present time do not justify the serious charge that my policy in Crete tends to serve other objects than the interests of my country.

“If they had merely denounced me as a national, as a man unmovably devoted to the national idea and deeply convinced that the only final solution of the Cretan question will be obtained by the union of the island with Greece, the charge would have been true and welcome to me, as I would be sharing it with the whole of the Cretan people.

“But that conviction does not make me blind to the dictates of a practical policy, and from the moment the free Kingdom, owing to the unfavorable issue of the war, was compelled to recall the army of occupation from here and to recognize the Cretan autonomy, I never ceased to think and to proclaim that we must adapt ourselves to the decisions of the Powers and accept the promised autonomy as another step towards the realization of the National Ideal.”

Mr. Venizelos went to Athens afterwards in order to communicate with the Greek Government concerning the course to be followed by the insurgents at Acroteri and also to meet Mr.

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Sfakianakis, an old Cretan statesman, who, although retired from active politics, had still a great influence upon public opinion in the island. He persuaded Mr. Sfakianakis to return to Crete with him and they called the Revolutionary Convention to a session, which was held at Melidoni, province of Rethymno, on the 16th of January.

At that session new officers of the Convention were elected and Mr. Venizelos, after announcing the result of the election, added the following :

“In announcing this result I think that I represent your sentiment when I greet with joy the election of the new officers. I am convinced that the same unanimity will also prevail hereafter in all our decisions concerning the pending question of our country.

“If a long past of slavery, and especially the period of the past ten years, which have been full of vicissitudes, have brought about divisions among us and made oppositions sharper, we must to-day put aside divisions and oppositions, extend the hand of friendship to each other, and try to raise up and free our country, which for so many centuries has been lying down, a slave.

“What we are about to obtain to-day certainly will not measure up to the wishes of our fathers nor to what we ourselves have dreamed of from our very cradle. But if by a wise and steady policy we succeed in securing the realization of what is

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being promised us by Europe we shall see our country constituting a free state, having her own flag and her own military force, being able to devote herself undisturbed to the work of civilization and peace; we shall see our country mistress in her own home and connected with her former master only by the ties of a simple and nominal suzerainty. Thus a very great step will be made towards the realization of the national ideal, and what is left to be done will be accomplished, in the fullness of time, without new convulsions and sacrifices, without disasters and without the interruption of our peaceful development."

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When the Greco-Turkish treaty of peace, after the war of 1897, was finally signed, there was no more hope left of obtaining the union of Crete with Greece. Mr. Venizelos, therefore, after deliberating with his friends and followers, consented to end the revolutionary movement and accepted the propositions of the Great Powers granting Crete a vast measure of autonomy. And while this solution was accepted by all Cretans, they did not fail to register their protest and reservation to the effect that they considered that measure only as a step to the only real and final solution, the union of the island with Greece.



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Led by Venizelos the insurgents went to the historical monastery of Arcadion, upon the ruins of which they raised the flag of autonomous Crete, only slightly different from that of Greece. After this ceremony they returned to Acroteri, whither the seat of the Revolutionary Convention had been transferred. The recognition of that Convention by the Great European Powers was one, and not the least important, of Mr. Venizelos' diplomatic triumphs. He established an executive committee—a cabinet—the presidency of which, in token of respect and appreciation, he offered to Mr. Sfakianakis, he himself being content with being a plain member of the committee.

It was then that the opportunity was offered Mr. Venizelos for proving his wonderful executive and organizing ability. For he was the brains that set the whole machinery of the new autonomous state in motion, and he accomplished his task despite all obstacles that had to be overcome. Within one month all the organic laws had been drafted, the whole of the administrative and judicial organization planned and the militia organized. The consuls of the Great Powers at Canea were astonished when they realized the tremendous amount of constructive work that had been done by Mr. Venizelos within such a short space of time.

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But while the Cretan Executive Committee had performed those wonders in organizing all the public services in the island within a very short time, the case was not the same with the Great Powers, which had as yet done nothing in the island from an international point of view, so that up to June, 1898, their rôle has been entirely negative.

But new massacres by the Turks at Canea had finally the effect of awakening the Great Powers. The Russian Government proposed then, and the other Powers consented, to appoint Prince George, the second son of the King of Greece, High Commissioner of the Powers in Crete, with a mandate to establish a constitutional government in the island.

On December 13, 1898, the High Commissioner arrived at Canea on board the French flagship, as the Turkish Government had distinctly objected to his going to Crete on board a Greek warship, and he was received by the people with great enthusiasm and demonstrations of joy.

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Prince George, as the High Commissioner of the Powers in Crete, selected his cabinet from among the leaders of public opinion, and of course Mr. Venizelos, whose popularity was growing from day to day, was included in the cabinet.

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The Constitution was drawn on conservative lines, in accordance with the opinions of Mr. Venizelos, who was the author of the Cretan laws and who thought that it would not be wise for the people of the island to pass all of a sudden from a dictatorial government into absolute liberty.

Prince George's policy, or rather the policy of a few men constituting his court, was not satisfactory to the people, and signs of disagreement between the Prince and Mr. Venizelos soon made their appearance.

In the year 1900 the Prince issued to the Cretans the following message: "During my visit to Europe I will ask the Powers to consent to the union of Crete with Greece, and I hope to succeed, owing to my family connections."

These words were evidently dictated by a sincere sentiment and a youthful impulse. They, nevertheless, disturbed Mr. Venizelos, who with all due respect pointed out to the Prince the fact that from the Governments' point of view it was dangerous to promise something the realization of which was almost impossible after such a short period of the temporary régime established by the Powers. The soundness of Mr. Venizelos' opinion on this matter was proved by the facts, and the Prince himself on his return from Europe

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did not hesitate to acknowledge his error. "You were right," he told Mr. Venizelos; "the Powers are categorically opposed to the union."

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There followed other disagreements and misunderstandings which complicated the situation and accentuated the latent enmity between the Prince's followers and those of Mr. Venizelos. In the beginning the Prince had a high opinion of Mr. Venizelos, whom he considered the most prominent among the Cretans and his best cabinet officer. Recognizing Mr. Venizelos' great talents, he had entrusted to him the framing of the Constitution and of the organic laws. But unfortunately the Prince was weak enough to listen to malicious suggestions of men around him who were envious of Mr. Venizelos' prominence and power.

The matter of building a palace for the Prince caused an incident which increased the tension in the relations between the Prince and his adviser. When shortly after his arrival at Canea, the Prince expressed a desire to build such a palace, Mr. Venizelos did not approve of his plan and thought it was his duty to enlighten the Prince upon the matter. So he asked him one day:

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"Is it true, Your Highness, that you think of building a palace?"

"They submitted to me such a plan," answered the Prince.

"And did you approve of it?"

"Why not?"

"I think that Your Highness will understand the reason. The building of a palace would mean the perpetuation of a situation which the Cretan people have accepted only as a temporary one, as the last stage towards the union. The present situation cannot last long. I think that the building of such a palace is useless, even harmful, as it would hurt the sentiments of the Cretans. Do not deprive them of the hope of a speedy union with Greece, even if it is not so near at hand as we wish it to be."

The Prince did not answer, but felt offended by the intervention of his adviser, and a painful misunderstanding remained between the two men. The situation became gradually more tense, until the Prince could find no other solution than to dismiss his adviser from office, on May 12, 1901.

That step was very serious, considering the great influence Mr. Venizelos had with the Cretan people. And the break between the High Commissioner and Mr. Venizelos was so wide



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that it seemed it could not be bridged in the future. And, what was still worse, this action of the Prince supplied the Cretan people with the opportunity of openly manifesting their long suppressed dissatisfaction with the Prince's way of running the government of the island.

A policy of intrigues and base calumnies could only lead to the revolution of Therisson. For the dismissal of Mr. Venizelos from the office of adviser to the Prince—the official name of the members of Prince George's Cabinet—had been the signal for the persecution of Mr. Venizelos' friends and partisans. Newspapers supporting Mr. Venizelos were suppressed and their publication in the future absolutely forbidden. On the other hand, it was sought by all possible means to slander Mr. Venizelos by denouncing him as conspirator, as England's friend and tool, and as an enemy of the union.

As a result of these machinations a sentiment of deep enmity to the Prince gradually grew among Mr. Venizelos' followers. The opposition to the Prince was getting stronger every day by the additions of new recruits to the army of those who were dissatisfied with the arbitrary methods employed by the High Commissioner in running the Government and popular sympathy for Mr. Venizelos, far from being influenced or diminished by the intrigues that were

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intended to hurt him, put him at the head of the movement against the Prince.

But the revolution of Therisson, as far as Mr. Venizelos was concerned, was not a personal quarrel, but a fight for a principle. The revolution had as its object the union of Crete with Greece. That movement was of a nature to affect the Prince, who was the High Commissioner of the Powers in the island, and who naturally would have to be deprived of that office were the union to materialize. With all that, the movement was not inspired by personal enmity to the Prince, nor by a desire to remove him from his office. In other words, in view of the great object that was to be attained, the fact that Prince George of Greece was holding the office of High Commissioner was immaterial, neither could national interests be forsaken for personal considerations.

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Thus, on March 23, 1905, the Revolutionary Convention at Therisson proclaimed the "political union of Crete with the Greek Kingdom into one, sole, free and constitutional state."

The Convention, in communicating these resolutions to the Great Powers, submitted at the same time the following arguments in support of their request:

I. That the autonomy granted by the Great

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Powers was considered by the Cretans to be only an entirely transitory stage towards the final liberation of Crete, which, according to the wishes of the Cretan people, could be no other than the union with Greece.

II. That the financial depression prevailing in the island was a result "of such a bastard and transient régime."

III. That Crete was isolated by a lack of tariff conventions.

IV. That it was impossible to attract foreign capital for the development of the island as long as the present situation lasted.

On the same day that the Revolutionary Convention at Therisson was proclaiming the union of the island with Greece, Prince George, who had obtained from the Great Powers permission that an international force co-operate with the Gendarmerie to prevent the insurgents from coming from Therisson down to Canea, issued a proclamation, too, in which he threatened such international intervention, unless the insurgents at Therisson were dispersed.

On the other hand, the regular Cretan Assembly, having met at Canea on the 7th of April, did not confine itself, as two years before, merely to expressing a wish for the union. In a hall decorated exclusively with Greek flags the Assembly formally proclaimed "the union of Crete with her

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mother, Greece, to constitute forever a part of her under the constitutional crown of George, the King of the Hellenes," and transmitted these resolutions to the Consuls of the Great Powers.

On April 19 the Great Powers answered that "they were firmly resolved to resort to any military or naval measure which they might deem necessary to secure respect for their decision that order should be maintained."

Those threatened military measures did not prevent the Cretans from joining the revolutionary movement which was spreading as the time went by; and when the Assembly, after having accomplished practically nothing, adjourned on May 18, many of the Cretan deputies went up to Therisson and joined the Revolution. One month later, one of the Prince's advisers resigned from the Cabinet and went to co-operate with Mr. Venizelos.

It was then that the Prince finally realized his mistake and sought to regain Mr. Venizelos' friendship. A common friend, Mr. Burchier, the correspondent of the London "Times" in the Balkans, undertook, at the request of the Prince, to meet Mr. Venizelos and try to effect a reconciliation. Mr. Venizelos met the Prince's emissary, but flatly refused to co-operate with the Prince. "For the time being," Venizelos told Mr. Burchier, "the Prince's views cannot consti-

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tute the programme of a practical policy. Therefore, we cannot accept them."

The Great Powers, in order to put an end to that abnormal and dangerous situation, decided to communicate with the insurgents, and on June 30, 1905, Mr. Venizelos and the other leaders were invited to meet the Consuls of the Powers.

The meeting took place just outside of Canea, the insurgents being represented by Mr. Venizelos and two other members of the Revolutionary Government. The English Consul, who was the dean of the consular body at Canea, opened the meeting in the name of his colleagues by a statement in which he recalled and explained the reasons why the union with Greece was not open to discussion and expressed regret over the unfortunate misunderstanding which had brought about the Revolution at Therisson.

This statement did not make any impression upon the leaders of the Revolution and the discussion ended, the meeting thus proving entirely fruitless.

On the 12th of July of the same year the Revolutionary Government issued a new proclamation, by which they asked that a government should be granted the island similar to that of Eastern Roumelia.

On July 18 martial law was proclaimed by the Powers all over the island, but the application



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of that measure had in the beginning only unimportant results, as the insurgents were holding the mountainous districts, where they were practically safe from attack.

Encouraged by the results of the Therisson movement, the regular Cretan Assembly at Canea voted many measures of reform which were part of Mr. Venizelos' political platform and all opposed by the Prince. And without giving the Prince's party time to organize an effective opposition, the Assembly voted itself out of existence and ordered a national assembly to convene for the purpose of deciding all pending questions.

During the following winter, negotiations between Mr. Venizelos and the Consuls of the Great Powers were carried on, and finally the insurgents in a formal letter to the Great Powers, drafted by Mr. Venizelos, announced their decision to put an end to the revolutionary movement and lay down their arms, under just and honorable conditions. The Great Powers then granted important reforms as well as amnesty to the insurgents, under condition that they should deliver 700 rifles to the international forces. Thus ended the Therisson Revolution, eight months after its inception, and after it had prepared the way for Prince George's resignation, which was offered formally in July, 1906.

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But the Cretan question was still far from the solution desired by the Cretans. The Great Powers were in possession of the island by their military forces, and they could curtail the autonomy they had granted by appointing a foreigner to the office of High Commissioner. Through King George's mediation in the European courts, however, not only was that danger averted, but the Great Powers granted King George the right to appoint the High Commissioner, such appointment to be subject only to a formal approval by the Powers.

As a result of that concession, Mr. Alexander Zaimis, a former Prime Minister of Greece, was appointed High Commissioner of the Powers in Crete to succeed Prince George, at the same time retaining his office as a representative in the Greek Parliament. The Great Powers, in order to facilitate Mr. Zaimis' work, permitted the organization of the Cretan Gendarmerie by a number of Greek officers and petty officers. Furthermore, they positively declared that as soon as the Gendarmerie were able to secure order in the island, the recall of the international troops would begin, to be completed within a year. And indeed, on the 14th of July, 1908, the first detachment of the international troops left Crete.

International events of great importance which supervened reacted unfavorably upon the situa-

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tion in Crete and rendered the union more difficult just at a moment when it seemed to be in a fair way to be accomplished. In the first place there was a revolution in Turkey, April 11, 1908. Then, on September 20, 1908, Emperor Francis Joseph proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria. Two days later Prince Ferdinand proclaimed in his turn the independence of Bulgaria. And on September 24th, 1908, another Cretan revolution broke out, the fourteenth since the year 1830.

The High Commissioner, Mr. Zaimis, in accord with the Greek Government, had left Crete "temporarily" on the 20th of September, never to return as the head of the Cretan Government. On the morning of September 24th the city of Canea was profusely decorated with Greek flags, while thousands of Cretans from the surrounding districts in a steady stream were coming into the city. Nobody was molested and the Turkish inhabitants were going about freely amongst the Christians. In the afternoon a mass meeting was held, and Mr. Venizelos, acting as chairman, made a speech in which he declared that the peaceful revolution was not directed against any one of the Great Powers and that its only object was to proclaim the definite union of the island with the mother country; from that moment, he said, the Government ought to act in the name of

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the free Greek state. At the same time the Cretan Assembly was called in extra session for the purpose of ratifying the decision of the people by a formal vote.

From the meeting place the people went to the foreign consulates and delivered to each consul a copy of the resolutions just adopted. Passing on the way the official residence of the High Commissioner, they hauled down the Cretan flag and raised the Greek flag in its place in the midst of great demonstrations of joy. The day following members of the Government and all other civil and military officers took the oath of allegiance to King George of Greece, under the shadow of the Greek flag. On October 12th the Cretan Assembly met and proclaimed "the independence of Crete and her union with the Kingdom of Greece and invited the King of the Hellenes to take possession of the Government of the island." Before proclaiming itself dissolved, the Assembly appointed an Executive Committee of five members, one of whom was Mr. Venizelos, with the mandate "to govern the country in the name of the King of the Hellenes, according to the laws of the Greek State."

Mr. Venizelos, who held in the Executive Committee the two important offices of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice, succeeded during that period in obtaining recogni-



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tion of the revolutionary government by the Great Powers through the interchange of diplomatic correspondence.

On July 13, 1909, the last detachment of the international troops left Crete. On a small island at the entrance of the port of Canea, the Turkish flag used to float, together with those of the Great Powers. The international troops on leaving removed both their own flags and the Turkish flag, too. Then Turkey protested to the Powers and they insisted that the revolutionary government raise again the Turkish flag upon that island, which demand was complied with.

This incident of the flag produced considerable dissatisfaction amongst the people, and the Government was compelled to resign. A temporary Government was appointed, composed of judges and other high civil officials. After about six months, when the Assembly met again in regular session, a parliamentary government was appointed, which was controlled by Mr. Venizelos, although he did not consent to be one of its members.

In April, 1910, there was another dissolution of the Assembly and new elections were held for a national constitutional assembly. Mr. Venizelos was elected President of the Assembly and later on was appointed to the office of Prime Minister.

This Assembly, which took the title "Greek



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Convention of the Cretans," in its session of April 17, 1910, voted again the union with Greece.

As soon as that resolution was carried, a Turkish representative from the district of Canea arose and was on the point of handing the President of the Convention a document in which the Turkish representatives protested against the way just inaugurated of carrying on the business of the Convention according to the Greek laws, when another representative, a Christian, snatched the document and tore it to pieces.

While the Turkish representatives were protesting, Mr. Venizelos picked up the pieces of the paper from the floor and tried to put them together. Being unsuccessful in this, he ascended the tribune and stated, in his name and in the name of his friends, that he disapproved of the attempt to prevent the Mohammedan deputies from freely expressing their opinions and that he invited them to replace the torn document, so that they might deposit it with the President of the Convention. This the Mohammedan deputies did, inserting an additional protest because of the destruction of the document.

Over this incident the Turkish Government did not fail to protest again to the Great Powers, who assured it that the Powers continued to recognize Turkey's rights of sovereignty over the island, and that therefore the Turkish Govern-

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ment need pay no attention to the wishes of the Cretan Assembly, expressed from time to time, for the union of the island with Greece. This answer caused great discouragement among the Cretans, who thought that the union, if not frustrated forever, would at any rate be deferred for a long time.

About the end of July, 1910, another incident occurred. The Cretan Parliament refused to admit the Mohammedan representatives or to permit the appointment of Mohammedans to public offices, unless they took the oath prescribed by the Greek Constitution. As a result of a protest by Turkey, the Powers sent a note to the Cretan Government stating that if the Mohammedan representatives were not admitted to the Parliament without taking the oath, and if Mohammedan citizens of Crete were not appointed to public offices without being required to take the oath, the Cretan ports and custom houses would be immediately seized by marines from the warships of the Powers.

The Opposition in the Cretan Parliament desired to resist this mandate of the Powers, but Mr. Venizelos, who was President of the Government, showed again his usual wisdom and spirit of moderation by persuading his friends to vote for the admission of the Mohammedan deputies without the oath. Of course this new

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manifestation on the part of the Great Powers only increased the anger and the despair of the Cretans.

But just at that time an altogether unexpected event happened. Mr. Venizelos was invited to Athens by the Military League to help free Greece from misgovernment.

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### **VENIZELOS IN NATIONAL GREEK POLITICS.**

#### **Leading the Reform Movement in Athens.**

When the military Revolution (as it has been called by the Greek people) broke out in Athens, on August 2, 1909, everybody in Greece greeted that movement with a shout of relief. The people were tired, disgusted with misgovernment, with the complete breakdown of the machinery of the State, and they felt that existing conditions could not continue any longer if Greece was to be saved from total ruin. When, therefore, the officers of the Military League by their peaceful revolution demanded that an end be put to those conditions and to those methods of government, they had the whole of the Greek people with them.

It happened, however, that since the organizers of that revolution, being military men, had

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had no experience in politics, they were unable to devise the comprehensive plan of reform necessary for the salvation of the state. Fortunately, they soon realized their inability and began to search for a man equal to the task. Some of the officers who were members of the Military League had served in Crete, where they had been sent to organize the Cretan gendarmerie, and since these men had had opportunities for observing Mr. Venizelos they were deeply impressed by his great talents as a statesman and his ability and resourcefulness as an executive. They therefore communicated their impressions of Mr. Venizelos to the leaders of the Military League, who invited Mr. Venizelos to come to Athens for a conference, at the same time offering him the office of Prime Minister.

Mr. Venizelos went to Athens and met the officers, to whom he outlined his plans of reform and military preparation, asking for liberty of action in case he should be entrusted with the government of the country. But he refused to begin his constructive work in Athens before he had time to arrange Cretan affairs in a satisfactory way.

Several months after that conference with the Military League and fully one year after the Military Revolution, Mr. Venizelos, while holding the office of Prime Minister in Crete, was nominated

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by petition of the people of Athens as a candidate for the National Assembly in the electoral district of Attica and was elected at the head of his ticket with an unprecedented majority, although at the time he was in Switzerland on a political trip to the capitals of the Great Powers.

One month after his election to the Greek National Assembly Mr. Venizelos resigned from his office as Prime Minister of Crete. Then a committee of deputies and other prominent citizens went from Athens to Canea to invite him formally to go to Athens and lead the people in the work of reconstruction. On the 5th of September, 1910, he landed at Piraeus and was greeted by the people of both that city and of Athens as the man sent by Divine Providence to save the country.



The Military League, seeing that the Dragoumis cabinet, which was in power, could not carry out the reforms that were generally recognized as necessary for bringing about a substantial improvement in all branches of public service, compelled it to resign, and on October 15, 1910, scarcely six weeks after his landing at Piraeus from Crete, Mr. Venizelos was invited by King George to form a new cabinet.

Mr. Venizelos submitted his platform to the King and explained to him his views upon the



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reforms to be introduced. "If Your Majesty will approve of my platform," Mr. Venizelos told the King, "and will allow me full liberty of action, I promise Your Majesty to make of Greece, within five years, a regenerated state, able to command respect and to vindicate her national rights."

King George was quick to perceive the ability of the man with whom he was talking and without hesitation granted him his full confidence. On October 19, the Venizelos cabinet, after taking the oath of office, appeared before Parliament.

The Opposition, despite their promise to maintain an attitude of friendly neutrality towards the new cabinet, had organized a parliamentary conspiracy to compel Mr. Venizelos to state whether he had obtained from the King a promise of the dissolution of Parliament, in case it would not co-operate with him. In pursuance of that scheme as soon as the Venizelos cabinet made its appearance in Parliament, many Opposition deputies left in a body, so that there was no quorum.

In that situation Mr. Venizelos decided to resign, at the same time stating to Parliament that he would advise the King to avoid the dissolution of Parliament, as being inopportune.

When Mr. Venizelos submitted the resignation of the Cabinet, the King took the view that a lack

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of a quorum did not prove a lack of confidence in the Government and insisted that they should appear again before Parliament and remain in power.

An imposing demonstration of over twenty thousand people adopted resolutions in which they expressed their confidence in the Venizelos Cabinet and petitioned the King to support it. The people went to Mr. Venizelos' residence and he assured them that thanks to the co-operation that existed between the King and the people, the reactionary intrigues of the parliamentary parties would be frustrated and the reforms planned by the Venizelos cabinet would be carried out.

Assured of the confidence both of the King and the people, Mr. Venizelos withdrew his resignation and appearing again before the Parliament, on October 11, asked for a vote of confidence. The result showed that 208 deputies had voted for the Government, 31 had voted against it and 27 had refused to vote.

Despite the great majority obtained, certain reservations expressed by many deputies while voting for the Government convinced Mr. Venizelos that he did not have a real majority and he decided to dissolve Parliament, so as to have elected a National Assembly unreservedly friendly to him and willing to support his platform.

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The King agreed with Mr. Venizelos, and on the evening of the same day a Royal Decree was published dissolving the Parliament, ordering new elections to be held on November 29, 1910, and calling the new National Assembly to session on January 8, 1911.

On the eve of the elections Mr. Venizelos made a speech to the people of Athens outlining his platform. A few parts of that speech are reproduced here:

"I do not promise you that the Government will bring about the millenium in a single day, for the illness being old, its cure must of necessity be long. But from the moment that this Government of reform came into power, you have noticed the change in methods of administration.

"You remember, two and one-half months ago, when I first came from Crete and the people in great numbers came to ask for my opinion, and when a great part of the Greek people, being misled, were in favor of a constitutional assembly, you remember that I unyieldingly opposed the constitutional assembly and that I repeatedly stated that only through a revision of the Constitution could the work of reform be brought to a fortunate end, while by a constitutional assembly the state would be thrown into a new revolutionary tempest in which its frail ship would be in danger of going down.

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“And I explained to you the principles that will guide me in politics. I told you that the paramount duty of a statesman is to sacrifice party interests for the common good. I also said that the second duty of a statesman is always to tell the truth to all, both high and low, and to be unmindful whether by so doing he may become disagreeable.

“I said at the same time that the very first duty of the men who hold office is to furnish an example of full submission to and respect for the mandates of the laws, so that they may have the right to impose the observance of the laws upon those who are governed. This Government has been in power only for about 50 days, and it has a right to claim confidently that during this short period not one of its acts was intended to promote party interests or those of any group of men at the sacrifice of public interests. And whenever it was necessary, you were told the truth, even at times when it was disagreeable to you.

“During that short period the laws have been equally administered for both high and low, for rich and poor, and the conviction has begun to gain ground that hereafter there is going to be equal justice for all.

“My fourth political principle remains to be proved; and that is that one of the first duties of a statesman is to consider power, not as the end,

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but only as the means for the realization of a higher object; that he should never be in a hurry to assume power if that is to be done at the sacrifice of his principles, and that he should not hesitate to relinquish power if he has to continue therein at the sacrifice of his principles.

“A year ago, when the revolution broke out, in which I had no part, but which I welcomed, I refused, although I was urged, to come to Athens to take a part in it, for I thought that I should not leave other sacred duties which occupied me in Crete. Only after six months, when the revolution seemed to have reached an impasse and my assistance had been urgently demanded, did I decide to come in order to try, as I stated, to bring about, if possible, amongst the different factions, an understanding that would make the end of the military revolution possible, while securing the continuation of the reform movement by the popular sovereignty.

“When my opinion was accepted I returned to Crete. And when I was asked to be a candidate for the National Assembly that was to revise the Constitution, I stated that it was impossible for me to abandon my duties in Crete and to assume other duties which perhaps were beyond my powers. Only when at the elections of the 8th of August the people by a plebiscite invited me, did I consider it my duty to come here. I, therefore, came and spoke to the people of Athens and dis-



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pelled the errors prevailing as to the character of the national representation that was called, and under pressure of public opinion I accepted the responsibility of office. Fifty days after my coming to power, it is the people's turn to render their verdict. I have a right to hope that the people will give me their undivided confidence, that I may carry out the government's platform.

"Certainly, the work of the future government will not be easy; they will have to meet obstacles greater than those yet encountered by this government of restoration. But no matter how difficult the work may be it will be brought to a happy end if the people are firmly determined to support it."

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We cannot here go into the details of the wonderful work of reform accomplished by Mr. Venizelos in the space of a few years. We will therefore only indicate the general direction of those reforms by mentioning the several branches of public services upon which they were primarily applied. Those branches were: Justice, Public Instruction, National Wealth, and Military and Naval Preparation.

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### **The Balkan Alliance Made Possible Through Venizelos' Statesmanship—The First Balkan War.**

The circumstances under which Greece, together with Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro, went to war with Turkey were explained by Mr. Venizelos in one of his speeches before the Greek Parliament after the war. The following are the more important parts of that speech :

“I came here to answer those who have blamed me for having engaged in the war when the history of the past did not permit me to have absolute confidence in our allies. I have, then, to point out that it was not in my power to select our allies for our struggle against the Ottoman Empire. The allies were offered to us by the facts, by the circumstances, by geographical and political history and by the ethnological formation that has shaped itself in the Balkan Peninsula in the past thirteen centuries.

“I did not wish for a war against the Turkish Empire, at least at the time that it broke out, and I should not have wished for one even later if only I could in some way have arranged the Cretan question, which had become a thorn in the side of Greece, and the further pendency of which rendered it impossible for Greece to live her normal political life.

“I tried to arrange that question, to continue

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a policy of a full and intimate understanding with the neighboring empire, in the hope that reforms might be introduced therein that would render life bearable for the millions of Greeks living there.

“And in my anxiety to come to that intimate understanding with the neighboring Empire, I went so far as to propose that the Turkish Government grant the Cretans the right, which they were so persistently asking for, to send their representatives to the Greek Parliament, although Crete should continue to be an autonomous state under the suzerainty of the Sultan, who should also have the right to maintain his flag upon the small island in Suda Bay.

“And I went still further in the way of concessions. I proposed, in exchange for the recognition of the Cretans’ right to send their deputies to the Greek Parliament, that Greece should undertake to pay Turkey a tribute for Crete. I proposed, in other words, in exchange for Turkey’s concession, that the Cretan deputies might be present in our midst, to render Turkey’s rights in Crete quite practical, by consenting to pay a tribute for Crete, although those rights before were only nebulous and nominal.

“And I went as far as that point in the way of concessions, because I was in hopes that I might bring the men who have governed Turkey during the past few years to their senses; but all

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my propositions were rejected. And, when the Government of the Young Turks, the irreconcilable nationalists, was succeeded in power by the Government of the really wise Kiamil Pasha, who many a time had recommended me not to proceed to any understanding with the Bulgarians; when, I say, the Young Turks were succeeded by Kiamil Pasha and the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Greece became strained and Kiamil repeatedly asked to see the Ambassador of Greece at Constantinople, that he might have a talk with him, the Greek Ambassador cabled the Government and announced Kiamil Pasha's persistent request to see him, adding that he had avoided seeing him up to that moment for fear that his meeting might expose Greece to the danger of misunderstandings on the part of her allies.

"The Government approved of the Ambassador's way of thinking. But the cunning Kiamil managed to lure the Greek Ambassador to a meeting, unexpected by him in a friendly house. The Ambassador was invited to tea, and upon entering found himself in the presence of Kiamil Pasha, the Grand Vizier of Turkey. The Grand Vizier hastened to address the Ambassador and to speak to him flatteringly. 'We who wish to live in harmony with the Greeks, we who have common enemies, how can we not come to an agreement and how is it possible for you to think of co-operating with those men who want to injure



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both us and you? Do you not want to have an understanding with us and, in such a case, to secure support for your subjects and all the benefits guaranteed to you by the good will of the Great Empire? I will not only do this for you, but also I have had in mind, for many years past, a plan for the solution of the Cretan question, which I am sure will be to the satisfaction of both states, and which I will manage to carry out.

“Such was the conversation between the Grand Vizier of Turkey and the Greek Ambassador at Constantinople, two or three days before the Ambassador’s departure. An occasion having been offered, I have stated all these facts, so that you may know them now, although I intended stating them only at some future time. And when you know these things, when you know that any arrangement of the Cretan question, after all possible concessions on our part was impossible, I do not believe you place any faith in the assurance given by Kiamil Pasha, which I have heard, repeated from time to time, since 1908. It was then that he said for the first time that he had a plan to settle the Cretan question to the satisfaction of both states. I do not think it was possible to take into serious consideration that conversation, made, as it was, on the eve of the war. When you have all these things in view, I will ask you: Do you think you can bring a serious charge against us from this tribune because, when it was



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proposed to us to participate in the war against Turkey, we agreed to do so? But, before you answer my question, I must give you some other information.

“A rapprochement with Bulgaria has been sought since the summer of 1910. There were some beginnings of an understanding at that time, and at the beginning of the year 1911 a more vigorous effort at a rapprochement was made, with a definite direction. That rapprochement had as an object the strengthening of the co-operation of the two national elements in Turkey, for the defence of their national rights, and at the same time it had as an object the conclusion of a defensive treaty, on the strength of which either state would be bound to come, with all its forces, to the assistance of the other, in case it was attacked by the neighboring Empire, either in its territorial integrity or in the exercise of other rights guaranteed by international law or by special conventions.

“We think that the splendid isolation in which Greece has remained for such a long time,—an isolation of which the great British Empire boasted for many years, but from which even that great nation has been compelled to come out in order to enter into the system of European combinations,—we think that that splendid and magnificent isolation—that I may not call it foolishness, in the case of Greece—must end.

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"Greece was not able by herself, in the face of the lessons of history, in the face of the experience of all other states, to expect that she should be in a position to defend alone, in every circumstance, the rights of the country. She, therefore, adopted the system of association of national interests, on the basis of which several states co-operate for the defence of definite objects of their internal policy, or of more general objects of their foreign policy.

"It is true that we did not intend to stop there and that we wished that, besides the defensive alliance that was proposed in March, 1911, and concluded in May, 1912, also an offensive alliance against the then neighboring state should be concluded, in case the internal situation of that state remained such as to render life unbearable for the Greek and Bulgarian nationalities in Turkey and to force the neighboring states to try to expel the Turkish Empire from their European provinces."

"But facts have forestalled us, before the conception had time to mature by evolution and to bring us to the conclusion of a defensive and offensive alliance. Still the evolution was quite normal, for matters having no relation to our own policy, but related to the national life of Serbia and Bulgaria, that is the massacres at Cotchana and Verana, have precipitated matters. And alongside of our action, there has been, without our knowledge, an understanding between Serbia

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and Bulgaria for the conclusion of an offensive alliance against the neighboring Empire and for the distribution of its European regions. At the time when the massacres mentioned were committed the public indignation in these two states was so great that, especially in Bulgaria, the country and the Government and the King were aroused."

"The facts are so fresh that they certainly did not slip from your memory. Bulgaria and Serbia, united then by an offensive alliance against Turkey, had decided to act against her in a war.

"And we were invited then—I do not remember the exact date, but I communicate to you the fact that we were invited and notified that the common mobilization had been decided upon, to begin at a fixed day, only three or four days after that of the notification. It was, in other words, communicated to us that after three or four days those two states were determined to mobilize, to impose the adoption of reforms which they were asking for, and that if within a fixed time an affirmative answer were not given them by Turkey, they would declare war and invade Turkey. And it was stated to us that those states would be happy if we undertook to co-operate with them by mobilizing at the same time.

"It is quite possible that another man in that circumstance might have said: 'I cannot participate in such an enterprise, which leads almost surely to war; I do not consent to participate, be-

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cause the history of thirteen centuries teaches me that in one of you at least I can have no faith; therefore I cannot proceed to any collaboration with you.' Another one might have said: 'Yes, I will collaborate, but before I do so, I desire that we settle the question of the distribution.' I, gentlemen, did not belong to the former class. I did not think that it was permitted to me to say: 'I do not co-operate with Bulgaria, that we may impose reforms in Macedonia and that, in case of need, we may go into a war which may bring about the distribution of European Turkey.' I did not think it was permitted to me to say that, because I knew that a necessary condition for the success of the struggle against the neighboring Empire was the co-operation of the Christian states of the Orient.

"Greece alone, even if from the point of view of military preparation she were not in the condition she was in, through the fault of those who are blaming me, but even if she had her military preparation developed to the highest degree, Greece alone, I say, was unable to conduct a successful war against Turkey. It was therefore, incumbent upon those who do not wish to deceive the people either to accept the fact that there ought to be, parallel to the military organization, the understanding and the effort to find allies for the utilization of the military forces, or to tell the people plainly that they cannot have confi-



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dence, that Greece alone with her military forces can accomplish nothing, and say to the people: 'Give up all your ideals and endure Turkey's policy towards the people of your own blood, and be satisfied with that.' It was impossible, of course, for me to follow such a policy. I knew that besides the military preparation we ought to proceed to understandings in order to find co-workers for the successful utilization of our military forces, but, as I said in the beginning of my speech, it was not possible for me to find those co-workers in other parts of the earth; I had to look for them amongst our neighbors.

"But I must confess, gentlemen, to a political defect. I am inclined by nature to be an optimist. And it was natural that optimism made me think in this way: All history has proved to me that we must not have much faith in our neighbors, the Bulgarians, but, on the other hand, we cannot oppose Turkey without their co-operation; besides, we have had our Parliament closed for many months past, and we cannot open it in order to resume our normal political life, for we have that cursed Cretan question, which will not let us be quiet, and which will bring us inevitably to a collision with Turkey the minute we decide to admit the Cretan deputies into Parliament.

"I thought, then, that if I were compelled the next day, against my will—certainly not of myself, for I should not wish to come to a collision



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with Turkey while I was without allies, but with some other, weaker, Government—that it was better for me to make the sign of the cross and say: ‘In the name of God! the Bulgarians were bad in the past, but Turkey is worse to-day, for she does not permit this state to live. Let us come to an understanding with them. There is plenty of room for all the peoples of the Orient, there is a way to obtain a true distribution according to the just views of each people after an exchange of populations for geographical reasons, so that all may live comfortably and happily.’ But I thought of something else, too: I thought that the struggle in which I was invited to participate would be conducted even without my co-operation.

“Matters had reached such a point that even the day of the mobilization was decided upon, and it was postponed for two or three days, only for the purpose of giving us more time to think the matter over. The war, then, would be made by the other three states, and I thought: ‘Is it proper, does it appear to be good policy; is it to our advantage from a national point of view that Hellenism should remain again isolated and that it should not co-operate in this struggle which the other Christian peoples of the Balkan Peninsula are entering in order to impose reforms upon Turkey or to drive her out of Europe?’

“The answer to this perplexing question wasn’t

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difficult. Other men who would have been only inspired and guided by the lessons of history, would have said: 'Why should we participate in such a war which, being conducted with such allies, is full of anxieties for the future? Why should we trouble ourselves? Internal matters are getting along nicely; the Government has a majority such as no other Government in Greece ever had; they are agreeable to public opinion and enjoy the confidence of the Crown; why, then, should they get mixed up in such adventures?' Other people would have thought that way. I could not have thought that way. I thought that if I did not participate in the war against Turkey, which the other states were about to declare, I should not participate, not because I would remain an inactive spectator, but because I should be determined to co-operate with Turkey.

"The annihilation of Hellenism in the Orient would have been complete had it allowed such a struggle to be conducted without its participation in favor of one side or the other. And the question was raised, not because I thought to fight on the side of Turkey in such a struggle—everybody else but me could have thought of such a thing—I should have never done it!—but at any rate, we had two roads open before us, either co-operation with Turkey, or co-operation with the Christian peoples, never neutrality.

"Neutrality, I repeat, would have brought

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about a complete decline of Hellenism in the Orient. But neutrality would have brought us to other great and terrible dangers which if we did not see we should have been blind. Neutrality would have brought us to one of two results—either a victory of the allies over Turkey or Turkey's victory over the allies, since as facts have proved, there was not to be an active intervention of the Powers to prevent the collision.

“And I ask, gentlemen, those who blame me for having entered the struggle, what would have been Greece's position in the one and what in the other case? If the allies were victorious—and that was natural, for facts have proved that Turkey's military weakness was such that very probably the allies would have been victorious—if, I say, the allies were the victors, they would have come, irresistibly, in front of the boundaries of the old Greece, the small Greece, in the same way as they have reached the Adriatic Sea, and then the people would have been justly aroused against the Government responsible for such an antinational policy.

“But as they may not agree with me when I claim that the allies would have been victorious over Turkey, I will admit for a moment that Turkey might have been the victor. I ask, gentlemen, of all those whose intellect has not been perverted entirely, I ask of them: ‘What would have been the position, not only of Hellenism in the Turkish

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State, but the position of Greece herself, of this small state, what would have been her position in the face of Turkish presumption and arrogance and aggressiveness at the moment when that Turkey should have been strengthened in a military sense by having defeated Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro?" And how terrible would have been the position of the men who govern Greece if they had to face a more insolent and more powerful Turkey?"

"But the opposition wants also to blame the Government for being too ready to yield. The Government, gentlemen, have been yielding. They really have been yielding in many things, in very many things. But the disposition to yield is one of my faults, and since I think that I possess some virtues, too, because of which I still enjoy the confidence of the Greek people, I shall perforce be accepted with my faults, that is with the disposition to yield.

"Since, however, my yielding did not cause any definite loss—for I did not turn over to the allies any part of Greece—and since my yielding failed and matters ended with our going to war, it is not fair that I should be blamed for this yielding at least, which if the ally were a better one and not false, would have solved the matters of the Orient in such a way as to make Greece a great state some day.

"But I am blamed not only for this fault of



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yielding, which, if it has no other advantage for Greece, has at least this great advantage, that in this new struggle which we are entering, we can appear before the foreign political world, before those who, whenever they agree to, settle according to their own will the rights of the small states, we have the right to keep our head high, for the new war which is drenching the peninsula with new blood has not been caused by any demand on the part of Greece to obtain her national rights to the last particle.

“And do you think this is not a great moral capital? But, besides yielding, they brought against me another charge, really more terrible, the charge of improvidence, a terrible charge for a statesman. For, if one can endure a statesman who, together with his qualities, has also the fault of yielding, it is impossible for one to admit that a man who is improvident is worthy to manage the destinies of a nation.

“And I have been charged with improvidence, because, while from the very first—to be exact, fifteen days after the beginning of the war—I had occasion to think that Bulgaria was not sincere in her relation as an ally,—I have been charged with improvidence, because, while I since have realized that, I did not profit by it, but allowed myself the hope that everything would go well, that everything would be peacefully settled, and because even on my return from London, being



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asked right and left, I said that I was optimistic and that everything would end well. Behold, then, the improvident man! But I ask you, gentlemen, did I do anything during all that time which proves that I have been improvident? And, while I was disposed to make all possible concessions for the sake of preventing the new war, is it true that I was not providing for the possibility that I might be compelled to defend the rights of Greece by the sword?

“Was I only a boastful politician when in a talk in London with Mr. Daneff, the present President of the Bulgarian Government, I fixed the limits beyond which Greece could yield only after a defeat in war, and was I trying only to scare my opponent, while as a matter of fact I was never thinking that it was possible for us to go to war and while I was taking no precaution for meeting that danger?

“I think, gentlemen, that I can say, in answer to all these questions, one big ‘No.’ Although, when the mobilization was ordered, Greece gave to the last unit the full number of men that one year previously I had promised you she would give; although within the seventeen days in which the mobilization and concentration were completed, the force which I had advised Parliament could be mobilized was in fact made up, did I take after that no precaution whatever against these eventualities which I was facing?

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“And is the state to-day, in the face of these eventualities, unprepared because of its Government? Gentlemen, the army which I stated last year in this chamber Greece would muster, the army which really marched on the seventeenth and the eighteenth days after the order of mobilization and invaded the Turkish Empire, that army was exactly one-half the force that Greece can prepare, arm and maintain to keep ready for the defence of her rights.

“Greece has succeeded, as I said, in preparing twice the number of men, ready to defend her rights; and to-day, despite all the losses of the war, there is at the new frontiers of Greece an army much superior to the one that was concentrated on the eighteenth day after the mobilization was ordered. And that army, gentlemen, after a campaign of nine months, is so fully supplied that one might say with pride that many model armies could not declare, under the same conditions, that their supplies were more plentiful.

After a mobilization lasting for nine months, during which plenty of war material has been used up, the army has more supplies and ammunition by five per cent. than was provided for by the plan of mobilization of the year 1911.

“You saw that Greek army, gentlemen, all of you, at the time it was leaving Athens. I did not happen to be here at other mobilizations. You

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who happened to see those mobilizations also compare what was done then with what is being done to-day. A field army of one hundred and twenty thousand men was provided for; two hundred and fifty thousand men came to the colors, and yet the Government was not embarrassed; it dressed and equipped all of them, and, after a campaign of nine months, you have seen them dressed like dolls. (Applause.)

"Have I been improvident then? Did I have no presentiment of the coming storm, and was I found unprepared to meet it? Did I not hasten to secure an alliance with those that have remained faithful to their oath and to the work of the regeneration of the Orient, with those who did not seek to establish their own supremacy in the Balkan Peninsula, but have looked only for an equilibrium amongst the Balkan peoples?"

\* \* \*

On September 25th, 1912, the smallest of the allied Balkan states, Montenegro, declared war on Turkey. On September 30th the other three states presented an identical note to the Turkish Government, followed by a declaration of war on the part of Bulgaria and Serbia against Turkey. On October 1st, Greece also declared war against Turkey. Mr. Venizelos, who was the Prime Minister of Greece at the time, announced to Parlia-

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ment the declaration of war and turning to the Cretan deputies, said: "In the name of the Greek people I welcome the representatives of the Cretans, present in this hall." Thus Crete had at last won her fight for union with Greece.

### **Venizelos at the London Conference After the War With Turkey.**

After the great victories of the Balkan allies and the irresistible advance of their armies the Turkish Government realized that the only way to prevent irreparable disaster, the capture of Constantinople itself by them, was by arranging an armistice. For that purpose they communicated directly with the allies. Bulgaria was the first to accept the armistice, as the last attacks by the Bulgarian army in front of Tchataldja had failed. Turkey also managed to obtain Serbia's and Montenegro's consent to the armistice. But Mr. Venezilos rejected it, in accordance with the understanding and for the interest of the allies, as with Greece continuing the war and dominating the sea, Turkey could not, during the armistice, transport fresh troops from Asia or carry supplies by sea to her troops in European Turkey. However, in order not to hinder the negotiations of peace Mr. Venizelos consented to participate therein under condition that Greece should continue hostilities.



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The armistice was signed November 20th, 1912, and London was agreed upon as the place for the negotiations of peace. Greece was represented at the Conference of Peace by Mr. Venizelos. The negotiations dragged along, thanks to the dilatory methods of the Turkish plenipotentiaries, who were only trying to gain time in the hope of new complications. Finally, on December 15, the head of the Turkish delegation communicated to the representatives of the allies the answer of his Government to the terms that had been offered by the allies. By that answer Turkey offered to introduce reforms in Macedonia!

After a short adjournment, the session of the plenipotentiaries was resumed, and then Mr. Venizelos, in the name of the allies, said to the Turkish delegates:

"You forget that we are on the morrow of a war, and that the whole of European Turkey has been conquered by the allied armies. We ask you to cede territories to us, and you answer by speaking about reforms. Between reforms and territorial concessions naturally there is no middle way—therefore, discussion is impossible."

"But," said the head of the Turkish delegation, "by your notes to the Porte and to the Powers you have asked for reforms. Here, then, we give you the reforms."

"There was talk of reforms before the war," answered Mr. Venizelos. "But once the war has



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taken place, they are entirely insufficient. Have you said your last word?"

The Turkish delegate answered that he would make the allies' opinions known to his Government, and there the session ended.

The Porte sent new propositions, more moderate, but, nevertheless, unacceptable. Then the Balkan allies handed to the Turks an ultimatum, in which they stated that no matter what the propositions were that Turkey proposed to offer at the meeting of December 24th, 1912, "if the Turkish government did not consent to give satisfaction to all the demands included in the note that was submitted on the previous day by the allies, they would break the negotiations and after four days hostilities would be resumed."

The last session of the London Conference was particularly stormy. Tired of the Turkish methods, the Balkan delegates had decided to put an end to the whole matter. They, therefore, requested the Serbian delegate, Mr. Novacowitch, to state, in the name of all, that as the Turkish propositions did not meet the demands of the allies, and as the negotiations upon the proposed new lines were not such as to give hope of an understanding, the plenipotentiaries of the allies were compelled to suspend the Conference. "Meeting adjourned," added Mr. Novacowitch.

"I demand the floor," said the Turkish delegate.

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"I regret to have to repeat to Your Excellency that the meeting has been adjourned," answered Mr. Novacowitch.

"This procedure is not regular," answered the Turkish delegate. "You may declare the rupture of the negotiations, but you have no right to suspend them, thus leaving them in the air. I demand that the meeting be continued."

"What we have done," interposed Mr. Venizelos, "we have done after deliberation. We have already come to an impasse. If you consider that our way of action is equivalent to a rupture, it is for you to say so and to accept the consequences. If Your Excellency has any proposition to offer which may help the progress of the negotiations and the coming to an understanding upon the matter which we came here to negotiate, you may communicate it to us privately. If your proposition justifies the resumption of the meeting, we will gladly consent to it. But only the full and complete acceptance of our terms would be sufficient for that."

"What you're doing now is contrary to all parliamentary customs," said the Turkish delegate.

"But you forget that we are not in a parliament here," remarked Mr. Venizelos.

That was the last session of the London Conference. The Treaty of Peace was not signed till much later, under scarcely concealed pressure from the Great Powers. But, after all, the

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Treaty of London has merely a historical value, for it was replaced, after the second Balkan war, by private conventions and treaties between the Balkan States and Turkey.

### **How Venizelos Prepared Greece for the Second Balkan War.**

Immediately after the rupture of the peace negotiations most of the delegates, including Mr. Venizelos, left London. New complications, caused by disagreements concerning the distribution of the conquered Turkish territories, were urgently calling Mr. Venizelos to Athens.

The stand taken by Bulgaria, as demonstrated by the attitude of her chief delegate at the London Conference, Mr. Daneff, who was President of the Bulgarian Sobranje and leader of the so-called Bulgaro-Macedonian party, was so unusual that everybody could see that the Bulgarians meant to play the role of "Prussians of the Orient."

As stated elsewhere in this book, Mr. Venizelos was not caught napping by Bulgaria's pretensions and designs, and took steps to safeguard Greece's interests by concluding the Treaty of Alliance between Greece and Serbia.

However, Mr. Venizelos was prepared to go to any reasonable lengths to avoid a break with Bulgaria. And, while in London, he was trying to ascertain the extent of Bulgaria's claims and to

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see whether a friendly settlement of differences were not possible. He wanted to talk matters over with Mr. Daneff, but the Bulgarian always took care, when visiting Mr. Venizelos at his hotel, to have somebody else accompany him and thus prevent any discussion between Mr. Venizelos and himself of Greco-Bulgarian differences and especially of the burning question of Salonica, which was included in Bulgaria's claims.

But there came a day when Daneff was in such a hurry to meet Venizelos that he had to neglect the precaution of having a companion. That was on the day after the rupture of the peace negotiations, over which he needed to consult with Mr. Venizelos. So he went to Mr. Venizelos' hotel alone.

The subject of Mr. Daneff's visit having been disposed of, the Bulgarian rose to leave. But Mr. Venizelos was too quick to let the opportunity go by.

"Since we are alone," he said, smiling, "let us talk about Salonica."

"But this is not an opportune moment."

"It doesn't matter; we have, anyway, a little time to state the bases of our future understandings."

"But I did not receive instructions from my Government. I don't know this matter."

"Now, let us talk seriously, and let us see how we shall arrange this matter."

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"With pleasure. But Salonica up to this moment has been in the hands of the army. Politics are excluded from there just now. We will talk again about it after the signing of the treaty of peace with Turkey."

"Salonica is not in the hands of the army, but under King George's government. Salonica belongs to Greece by right of history and by right of conquest. What I can tell you is that Greece is ready for any other sacrifice for the maintenance of the Balkan Alliance. But to give up Salonica, —that never will be done,—never, never."

\* \* \*

While neglecting nothing that would insure victory in the case of war with Bulgaria, Mr. Venizelos showed in the negotiations between the two Governments a most conciliatory spirit. Both Greece and Serbia accepted the arbitration of their differences by the Emperor of Russia. But the Bulgarian Government were determined to place the representatives who were to go to Petrograd in the presence of an accomplished fact. The whole Bulgarian army was ordered to advance with the twofold purpose of occupying Salonica and of dislodging the Serbians from strategical positions held by them.

To Greece and Serbia nothing was left then but to fight, and the second Balkan war was declared.



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On the 19th of June, 1913, the Serbians won decisive victories over the Bulgarians. At the same time the Greek army threw the Bulgarians out of the Salonica valley and in a series of victories pushed them steadily on to the Bulgarian frontier.

Another Balkan state, Roumania, having entered this war, Bulgaria's position became unbearable, and she soon realized that she had either to submit and acknowledge defeat or else be annihilated. She preferred to submit and asked for an armistice through the intervention of the Russian Government.

After a consultation held at Uskub between Mr. Pasitch, the Serbian Prime Minister, and Mr. Venizelos, the two allied states sent a note to Petrograd expressing their gratitude to Russia for her intervention and declaring that they were ready to enter into direct negotiations with Bulgaria, but that they could not stop hostilities.

Almost immediately Bulgaria sent her plenipotentiaries to Nisch to negotiate the terms of peace with the representatives of Greece and Serbia. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria telegraphed to the King of Roumania announcing the departure of the Bulgarian delegates and requesting that the advance of the Roumanian army into Dobrudja be stopped. Thereupon, the King of Roumania sent an identical telegram to the Kings of Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, insisting upon the con-

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clusion of an armistice and upon the speedy opening of peace negotiations.

Immediately the allies agreed upon the terms of the armistice, and the seat of the peace conference was transferred from Nisch to Bucharest.

### **Representing Greece at the Bucharest Conference After the Second Balkan War.**

On his way to the Roumanian capital as the representative of Greece in the peace conference, Mr. Venizelos from Athens went to Macedonia and met King Constantine, who was in the front, at the head of the Greek army. For many hours King Constantine, Mr. Venizelos and the General Staff of the army were in consultation, in the open air, and leaning over a bare wooden table they drew the map of the new Greece which was to be submitted and insisted upon by Mr. Venizelos at Bucharest. The King was joyful and very cordial to Mr. Venizelos. At the moment of his departure Mr. Venizelos was reminded by the King, in the way of a last instruction, that he was to secure the port and city of Cavalla for Greece.

"I promise it to Your Majesty," said Mr. Venizelos quietly; and he hurried to catch the train to Bucharest.

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As told elsewhere in this book, Mr. Venizelos' plan of foreign policy included the maintenance of friendly relations with Roumania, with whom

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Greece had no ground for difference except in the matter of the Coutso-Vlachs of Macedonia, a few tens of thousands of men, the standing of whom could make absolutely no difference to the future master of Macedonia. Therefore, Mr. Venizelos took care to resume with Roumania diplomatic relations which had been severed for some considerable time through the fault of Greek statesmanship.

One of Mr. Venizelos' virtues is that he never loses an opportunity for working for his country. While in London, attending the Peace Conference, he met, besides the Roumanian Ambassador accredited to the English court, another prominent Roumanian statesman, Mr. Take Jonsescu, who was sent there at that time as a delegate of his Government to negotiate with the Bulgarian delegates for the modification of the frontier between Roumania and Bulgaria.

Mr. Venizelos met Mr. Jonsescu for the first time at the Roumanian embassy in London. They, of course, talked politics, and the Greek statesman at once made his position clear in the matter of the Coutso-Vlachs. "Let us forget the past," he said to Mr. Jonsescu. "Recent events have entirely changed the complexion of the Balkan Peninsula. Greece and Roumania, who are the only two non-slavic countries in the Peninsula, have every reason to come to an understanding. What is it, then, that is separating us? The

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Coutso-Vlach question? But I give you my word that we are ready to grant the Coutso-Vlachs every possible liberty."

Mr. Jonescu was greatly impressed by Mr. Venizelos' sincere and friendly statement and promised to communicate it to the King and the Prime Minister of Roumania. Venizelos, on the other hand, when the treaty of alliance between Greece and Serbia was signed at Salonica, on the 1st of May, 1913, communicated to Mr. Pasitch, the Serbian Prime Minister, the substance of the conversation he had had with Mr. Jonescu in London, and they agreed to ask Roumania to state the attitude that she would take in case of war between the two Balkan states and Bulgaria.

As a result of that agreement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece sent the following telegram to the Greek minister at Bucharest:

"I request you to meet Mr. Take Jonescu and communicate to him on the part of Mr. Venizelos the following: The present moment is most critical for the future of the Balkan Peninsula, and Roumania cannot be indifferent to the menace of a war between the allies and to the possible results of such a war.

"Roumania could by her attitude prevent the war, by using firm language at Sofia, and in this manner a broader change of Balkan equilibrium could also be prevented, a matter in which Roumania cannot but be interested.

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"Besides, by securing peace she would gain a great international prestige. On the other hand, by coming to an understanding with Greece and Serbia, she would make the result of the war with Bulgaria sure and would in this manner help knock down once for all Bulgaria's evident tendencies for supremacy and establish, to her own profit, the complete equilibrium of power between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece.

"Furthermore, it is a rare opportunity for Roumania to obtain a much more radical modification of her frontiers towards Bulgaria; for, in participating in the war, she would not clash with Russia to-day.

"I know that Mr. Take Jonescu does not direct Roumania's foreign policy, but neither do I manage in a direct way the foreign policy of Greece. The present communication has an unofficial and entirely friendly character. But it could take an official character as soon as you learn from him that a step on the part of Greece for such an understanding would find an echo near the Roumanian Government."

The above telegram was sent to Bucharest on May 31st, 1913. Two days later the Greek minister at Bucharest wired to Athens the following answer:

"I have the honor to inform you that Mr. Take Jonescu, back from Constantza, received me about midnight. I transmitted to him the communica-



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tion of His Excellency the Prime Minister and we conversed at length.

"Mr. Take Jonescu requested me to answer on his part that he is to the fullest degree in accord with His Excellency Mr. Venizelos, that the mobilization by Roumania will have as an object the imposition of peace upon Bulgaria and the maintenance of the equilibrium in the Balkan Peninsula, and under no condition will Roumania cooperate with Bulgaria to the detriment of Greece and Serbia, and that Mr. Bratiano holds the same opinion.

"Mr. Take Jonescu added to me that the mobilization had been postponed owing to a telegram from His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, but that it will be effected, if Bulgaria does not keep quiet."

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On reaching Bucharest, at the head of the Greek delegation for the Peace Conference, Mr. Venizelos realized that the environment was decidedly unfavorable, if not inimical, to Greece. The fate of Cavalla had been already discounted, and contrary to the wishes of Greece, at that. Public opinion was misled, and the Roumanian press was rather unfriendly to Greece. Above all, Roumanians wanted a speedy end of the war, for, amongst other things, they were afraid of cholera, the fear of which had been cleverly spread

the Roumanian provinces by Bulgarian It was imperative, therefore, from the an standpoint, that the peace negotia- ould be rushed, and if Cavalla were to delay, she might be given to Bulgaria.

elos set immediately to work. He met o, the powerful leader of the Roumanian on, also the Prime Minister and a score statesmen, including Mr. Jonescu. On visit to the Roumanian Prime Minister, zelos took the bull by the horns. "There tely no dissent between Greece and Rou- The question of the Coutso-Vlaachs? But no such question. We are ready to give sfaction in anything you want on that To show you the sincerity of our inten- will make you a proposition. I under- have signed a convention with Bulgaria ng this question. Well, I accept the same ut for the Coutso-Vlaachs living in Greece. satisfied?"

ked on the same lines to Mr. Bratiano. coming to the negotiations of peace, he ow, what do we ask for? We are the still our demands are only reasonable. or nothing else but a just and permanent And this is not possible except on the Balkan equilibrium." And Mr. Venize- into the details of the matter in the same ad done with Mr. Jonescu in London six

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months before. Mr. Venizelos had also an audience with the King of Roumania and was glad to find that the King shared his views about the Balkan equilibrium. The King desired positively that the treaty of peace should be signed at Bucharest and that it should establish Balkan equilibrium under the moral hegemony of Roumania.

At the opening of the Peace Conference, both the Greek and Serbian delegates declared that they would not consent to any extension of the armistice. Thereupon the Prime Minister of Roumania proposed the system of private understandings, in which details of the different questions would be discussed and arranged and the results of those understandings communicated at the general meetings of the delegates. This proposition was accepted for the sake of facilitating and expediting the work of the Conference.

The Bulgarian delegates tried to turn this system of private understandings to their advantage by spreading dissension and mistrust among their opponents. They first approached the Roumanian Prime Minister and made him understand that they were ready to make every possible concession to obtain Roumania's support. Failing in this, they next spoke to the Serbians of the community of their Slavic origin and of the coming reconciliation of the two sister states, which

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fateful misunderstandings had so fiercely separated for a moment.

Then they turned to the Greeks. Mr. Tontcheff, the spokesman for the Bulgarians, tried to explain the importance that the port of Cavalla had for Bulgaria, on the ground that the other ports that were to be left to her had no value at all and could not be utilized.

"What?" objected Mr. Venizelos. "Do you want one port for each province? But this is a luxury that even the Austrian Empire has to go without, for it has only one port, Triest. Listen to truth and to sincerity. You must give up this demand, or we shall not be able to come to peace. Cavalla will remain with Greece, at the price of any sacrifice."

Mr. Tontcheff insisted and tried to minimize the value of the port of Dedeagatch, which was to be retained by Bulgaria.

"Still, you cannot deny," answered Mr. Venizelos, "that at Dedeagatch there is a junction of all the three railroad lines, Salonica-Andrinople-Constantinople, which obviously proves the importance and the commercial value of that port. On the contrary, Cavalla is about forty kilometers away from the railroad line and is surrounded by mountains, so that the construction of a branch line to Cavalla is very difficult. And if the port of Dedeagatch is bad, that of Cavalla must be



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considered as worse and as being in a primitive condition."

"I wish to hope," said Tontcheff, "that this is not your last word upon this matter."

"A vain hope."

"I will ask you to think it over. I can assure you of the best of intentions on the part of Bulgaria, who, after all, would rather have the Bulgarians in Macedonia come under Greek domination than under Serbian, by which they would be entirely absorbed and assimilated. . . ."

A smile was the only answer on Mr. Venizelos' part, and the discussion ended there.

After many days of discussions and private understandings the Bulgarian delegates came to agreements with the Roumanian and the Serbian delegates and signed with them the preliminary protocols of the treaty. It was then that the Bulgarians tried once more to separate the allies by coming to understandings with the Roumanians and Serbians without the co-operation of the Greeks. In the evening Mr. Tontcheff visited the Roumanian and Serbian delegates and asked them, now that peace was practically concluded between Bulgaria on one part and Serbia and Roumania on the other part, what they would do if the Bulgarians, owing to the irreconcilable attitude of the Greeks, were compelled to break negotiations with them and to leave without signing the treaty of peace.



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Mr. Pasitch, the Serbian delegate, answered that they would simply not sign the treaty without the Greeks, while the Roumanian Prime Minister went one step further by declaring that should the war be resumed the Roumanian army would advance upon Sofia.

And so we come to the last session of the Peace Conference, which was taken up entirely by the question of Cavalla. Mr. Venizelos, following the example of the Serbian Prime Minister, had already consented to some concessions in favor of Bulgaria from the original Greek demands, stating at the same time that those concessions were the last and that it was impossible for him to wire to King Constantine to ask him to grant new ones.

The discussion continued for several hours, with Venizelos attacking the Bulgarians along their whole line, refuting their every argument and pushing them steadily back upon their last defences, until they acknowledged defeat and gave up the fight. As he had promised King Constantine, Venizelos had saved Cavalla for Greece.

After having lost Cavalla, the Bulgarians tried to push their frontier as near that city as possible. Mr. Venizelos refused any new concessions by cleverly pleading ignorance of military matters. "I am not a soldier," he said, "and don't understand frontiers and strategical points; I can, therefore, do nothing else but insist upon the

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frontier which has been defined to me by my King and his General Staff."

A deadlock being now threatened upon that minor matter, General Coanda, the Chief of the Roumanian General Staff, volunteered his services as a mediator, and his offer was accepted. After carefully studying the map, the Roumanian general submitted to the approval of the delegates a middle line giving Bulgaria a strip of land without injuring Greece from a strategical point of view.

Mr. Venizelos insisted for some time and finally said to General Coanda: "I have no knowledge of military matters, and I should be compelled to wait for the consent of our General Staff, the decisions of which I have instructions to defend. I have such a great confidence in you, however, that if you will take the responsibility to assure me that the modification proposed by you does not injure Greece's strategical position, I am ready to accept it."

"I assure you of that," answered the General.

"I thank you, General," said Mr. Venizelos. "I accept."

That last difficulty having been overcome, the general session of the Conference was resumed, and its President, the Prime Minister of Roumania, announced the successful termination of the Conference of Peace by this statement:

"I am happy to be able to announce to you that

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a complete agreement has been reached upon all questions."

King Constantine was the first to acknowledge and to honor the great service Mr. Venizelos had rendered his country at Bucharest. As soon as he received Mr. Venizelos' telegram announcing that the Treaty of Peace had just been signed, the King sent him the following telegram:

"I thank you for the announcement of the signing of peace. God has abundantly blessed our efforts. In the name of the Nation and in Mine I express to you my Royal thanks. A new and glorious period is opening before us. And in testimony of My gratitude to and of My esteem for you I confer upon you the Grand Cross of My Royal Order of the Savior. The Fatherland is grateful to you.

CONSTANTINE, R."

In answer to this telegram Mr. Venizelos wired the King as follows:

"Deeply affected by Your Majesty's telegram, I respectfully ask you to accept the expression of my unalterable gratitude for your indulgent appreciation of my services.

"After the happy conclusion also of the second war under the Great General-King, Who by his sword has enlarged Greece, our most beloved Fatherland comes into possession of the place that belongs to her in the world, and she will ad-

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vance with a steady step to a very vast future, while securing her greatness and her prosperity.

VENIZELOS."

As soon as the Treaty of Bucharest was signed, Mr. Venizelos returned to Athens, where he was enthusiastically received by the people.

### **After the Balkan and Up to the European War.**

But circumstances did not allow Mr. Venizelos to rest upon his laurels. For the Treaty of Bucharest had only settled the question of the Greco-Bulgarian frontiers, and there were left pending the matter of the Greek frontier in Epirus and the final disposition of the islands in the Aegean Sea, which during the Balkan-Turkish war had been occupied by the Greek navy. Both these questions were left open, and their settlement depended upon the decision of the Great Powers, the representatives of which were in conference at London for that purpose, under the presidency of Sir Edward Grey.

The Great Powers appointed a special military commission with instructions to study the question of the Epirus frontier on the spot and to proceed to the final demarcation of the Greco-Albanian frontier. The commission after a study upon the disputed ground met at Florence, and there a protocol was signed, by which the whole of Northern Epirus was taken away from Greece and given to the Albanian state that was then being formed

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in accordance with the wishes of the Triple Alliance, which had the upper hand at that time.

Venizelos, upon being informed that the Florence protocol was unfavorable to Greece, thought that if the question of the Epirus frontier were allowed to be settled separately, there was danger that the same Powers of the Triple Alliance would also oppose a solution of the question of the Aegean Islands in a manner favorable to Greece. He therefore appealed to the English Government and asked them to combine the Epirus question with that of the Islands.

Fortunately for Greece, the English Government complied with Mr. Venizelos' request and obtained the combination of the two questions, which were thus settled at the same time. By their decision, the Great Powers, while curtailing the Greek frontier in favor of Albania, awarded to Greece all the islands in the Aegean Sea that were occupied by the Greek fleet, except the small islands Imbros and Tenedos, lying near the entrance to the Dardanelles, which were restored to Turkey. Even after that settlement Venizelos had to worry about other matters. For Turkey, secretly encouraged by Germany, not only refused to recognize the decision of the Great Powers, but entered upon extensive naval preparations, with the declared intention of regaining, by force if necessary, the islands occupied by Greece.



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Greece was saved from this new danger by both Venizelos' quick action and by the benevolence of the Government of the United States, which consented to sell to Greece two ships no more necessary for the new American Navy, but still serviceable and formidable, the "Mississippi" and the "Idaho." By the acquisition of these warships the Greek Navy regained superiority over the Turkish fleet and Venizelos could thereafter hear the Turkish threats without worrying. But even after having secured naval supremacy over Turkey, Mr. Venizelos, being a wise and careful statesman, did not consider it to be to the advantage of Greece to force matters to the point of war. On the contrary, he showed patience and a spirit of conciliation and tried to convince the Grand Vizier of Turkey that it would be to the common advantage of both countries if they reached a friendly settlement of the question of the islands, by mutual concessions.

The Grand Vizier shared Mr. Venizelos' opinion, and it was decided that they should meet at Brussels for the settlement of the existing differences between Greece and Turkey. But while the two prime ministers were on their way to the Belgian capital, the European war broke out and prevented their meeting.

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